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## ARTISTIC IDEALS<sup>1</sup>

### II. SPONTANEITY

By DANIEL GREGORY MASON

"These roses under my window make no reference to former roses, or to better ones; they are for what they are; they exist with God to-day."—*Emerson.*

#### I

AN academic and over-conscientious friend of Renoir's once reproached him with being the kind of painter who paints only for his own amusement. "That I am," cheerfully agreed Renoir. "If it did not amuse me I should not paint at all. I cannot feel that the fate of the French Republic depends upon my art." American artists of the kind who pride themselves on their "practicality" might consider this the utterance of a "frivolous Frenchman," but possibly they would be the better themselves for a little of such frivolity. Indeed, indispensable as independence may be to the artist, it is after all only a means, and the end it aims at is a frivolity like Renoir's—or perhaps we might better call it spontaneity. Until we have risen above anxiety as to how others receive our art, we cannot practice it disinterestedly and freely, we cannot be spontaneous. Servitude to public opinion takes not only the gross form of worldly ambition, with its desire for money, fame, or influence, but many subtler forms, such as paralysing jealousies and envies, abnormal discouragements and lassitudes, perverse extravagances and whims. In all its forms it is an intolerable slavery. The only freedom for any artist is in

<sup>1</sup>These papers on "Artistic Ideals" the author has based on excerpts from his reading which he has found inspiring, in the hope of thus sharing their stimulus with other artists.

spontaneity, in delighted absorption in the art process itself, unspoiled by concern for the fate of the product—in its difficulties and adventures, its problems and solutions, its successes and its failures. Worldly ambition is consequently the most fatal enemy of art; for the ambitious artist regards beauty not as an end but as a means, and beauty will not give herself to one who regards her as a means.

The contrast between ambition and art, between preoccupation and spontaneity, has been vividly dramatized by a French critic in the persons of Berlioz and César Franck.<sup>1</sup> "Franck," he says, "is one of the noblest of artistic figures: glory, that stimulant so strong with romantic natures, seemed not to count for him. . . . Berlioz, for instance, dreamed of excitement. He wished to loose among shuddering crowds the clamor of Babylonian orchestras. . . . He prepared his public, hired halls, organized rehearsals. He sent articles to the newspapers, manœuvred the advertising. . . . César Franck, on the contrary, saw in the work of art only an act of the inner life, something like a silent virtue. . . . His life had the beautiful spiritual unity of direct careers, built up slowly, far from passions and rumors, devoted to thought. This was what gave him his serene dignity, his smiling gravity."

To illustrate the contrast thus suggested, two pictures occur to our minds. One is of Berlioz at the general rehearsal of his "Les Troyens" at the *Théâtre Lyrique* in Paris, November, 1863. He is sixty years old, and has been at work for seven years on this opera which he hopes will be the supreme success of his career. But the Emperor not only does not mount it at the *Opéra*, but points his neglect by producing with great magnificence "Tannhäuser," written by a foreigner. "Berlioz," says his biographer, "beside himself with rage and disappointment, attacked his unexpected rival and his opera with a fury that knew no bounds." So he has to content himself with a performance at the *Théâtre Lyrique*. At the end of the rehearsal he exclaims, with tears coursing down his cheeks: "It is beautiful, it is sublime!" The public does not think so. There are scornful articles in the papers, theatrical parodies, and only a score of performances. The disappointment, we are told, "disheartened Berlioz and killed him. . . . He retired to his house . . . taciturn, desolate, seeing only a few chosen friends who tried to console him, and cared for like a child by his mother-in-law." A few years later he died.

<sup>1</sup>Maurice Boucher: "L'Esthétique de César Franck." *La Revue Musicale*, January 1, 1922.



The other picture is of César Franck at sixty-seven. His symphony, the only one he has written, has been announced for performance at a Conservatory concert, largely through the persistence of the conductor, for Franck is regarded by the powers as a nonentity. It is little rehearsed, and indifferently played. Gounod, dictator of music in the world of fashion, declares it "the affirmation of incompetence pushed to the point of dogma." Never mind; César Franck, this obscure organist and teacher, this "little man in the coat too long and the trousers too short," likes it. He bows low to the audience, as his habit is on the rare occasions when his pieces are played. He walks home with elastic step, keeping time, we may be sure, to the syncopated trumpet theme of the first movement. At his door his wife meets him with eager questions: "How did it go? Was it a success? Did they like it?" "It sounded just right," he answers with his happy smile, "just as I expected it would. . . ." About a year later he died. Four days before his death M. Arthur Coquard brought him news of the success of "Samson et Dalila" by his friend Saint-Saëns, always so much more popular with the public than he. "I see him yet," says Coquard, "turning towards me his poor suffering face to say vivaciously and even joyfully, in the vibrant tones that his friends know, 'Très beau, très beau!'"

Not even Franck, however, was able always to maintain so beautiful a spontaneity; with all his angelic detachment he was sometimes endearingly subject to human infirmities. When he was made a member of the Legion of Honor, not for his music but for his teaching, he uttered almost the only repining word recorded of him. "Yes," he said, "they honor me—as a professor!" On the other hand Berlioz, as every reader of his *Mémoires* knows, was capable of heroic artistic disinterestedness. His singular preoccupation with public opinion was not commercial in motive, and he was justified in his proud claim: "The love of money has never allied itself in a single instance with my love of art; I have always been ready to make all sorts of sacrifices to go in search of the beautiful, and insure myself against contact with those paltry platitudes which are crowned by popularity." Play-actor though he was by temperament, when beauty moved him deeply he forgot everything else, as in that cry at the rehearsal, "It is beautiful, it is sublime!" In such moments he was a happy man, an untrammelled artist. Even by the most devoted, then, spontaneity is never definitely attained, nor by the most ambitious ever completely compromised; in all it is fluctuating and precarious. Indeed, spontaneity may be said, by a delightful and highly

human paradox, to be one of the most laborious of achievements. It is precisely for that reason that a conscious recognition of it as an ideal is vital to young artists.

A French author is quoted by Matthew Arnold as giving to a young fellow-craftsman this counsel. "I am going to advise you in a way quite opposite to that of the world. Others will say to you: 'Sacrifice everything to ambition.' I say to you: 'Sacrifice before everything ambition, as the world understands it. Do not worry about fortune or fame. March straight towards one single end, that of enlightening your fellow-men, no matter in what condition or by what means.' " It is those who live by such a philosophy who become, whatever their worldly fate, the great spiritual leaders of mankind: "spirits," as Joubert characterized them in a passage also quoted by Arnold, "lovers of light, who, when they have an idea to put forth, brood long over it first, and wait patiently till it *shines*, as Buffon enjoined, when he defined genius to be the aptitude for patience; spirits . . . who cannot rest except in solid truths, and whom only beauty can make happy; spirits far less concerned for glory than for perfection, who, because their art is long and life is short, often die without leaving a monument, having had their own inward sense of life and fruitfulness for their best reward." In a book called "*La Possession du Monde*" a contemporary French writer, M. Georges Duhamel, contrasts the wisdom of such men, their love and study of the masters, which he calls *un bon calcul et une douce chose*, with ambition—*une enivrante passion*. The only world we artists can possess, he says, is an inner one in comparison with which the outer world of ambition is so poor that to strive after it is wantonly to impoverish ourselves. Our function as artists begins and ends with giving of our measureless inner riches; whether what we give is received or not, by whom, or by how many, is no concern of ours. To be an artist at all is to know instinctively that it is more blessed to give than to be received.

"Looking at miles of painting and statuary," quaintly comments Henry Brewster in a letter from Rome,<sup>1</sup> "I ask myself why all this labor, unless the good people enjoyed it. As soon as one fancies them having toiled with love and got up cheerfully in the morning for the day's work, their pictures and their statues become quite pleasant to look at; but if they were simply struggling to do something remarkable, they might just as profitably for themselves and for us have walked the treadmill. I think most reputations seem stolen after a while because they were not earned

<sup>1</sup>Ethel Smyth: "Impressions That Remained." II, 283.

with enough joy." Keats did not make that mistake. "Praise or blame," he writes a friend, "has but a momentary effect on the man whose love of beauty in the abstract makes him a severe critic on his own works. My own domestic criticism has given me pain without comparison beyond what 'Blackwood' or the 'Quarterly' could possibly inflict: and also when I feel I am right, no external praise can give me such a glow as my own solitary reperception and ratification of what is fine. . . . That which is creative must create itself. In 'Endymion' I leaped headlong into the sea, and thereby have become better acquainted with the soundings, the quicksands, and the rocks, than if I had stayed upon the green shore, and piped a silly pipe, and took tea and comfortable advice. I was never afraid of failure; for I would sooner fail than not be among the greatest."<sup>1</sup> It is because Stevenson's strolling player de Vauversin, in the "Inland Voyage," is equally unafraid of failure that he is the very type of the true artist everywhere—so immersed in the joy that he has no thought for the reputation. "If anyone is a failure in the world," he asks his companions over the wine, "is it not I? I had an art, in which I have done things well, and now it is closed against me. I must go about the country gathering coppers and singing nonsense. Do you think I regret my life? Do you think I would rather be a fat burgess like a calf? Not I! I have had moments when I have been applauded on the boards: I think nothing of that; but I have known in my own mind sometimes, when I had not a single clap from the whole house, that I had found a true intonation, or an exact and speaking gesture; and then, *messieurs*, I have known what pleasure was, what it was to do a thing well, what it was to be an artist. And to know what art is, is to have an interest forever, such as no burgess can find in his petty concerns. *Tenez, messieurs, je vais vous le dire*—it is like a religion."

## II

Spontaneity is an ideal little practiced among us nowadays. The prevailing temper of our time is as unfavorable to it as to independence. We shall hardly be surprised at its achievement only by the very few individuals who have strong enough characters and clear enough heads to oppose themselves to the herd, if we consider how averse to it, in the modern world, is the whole vast insidious force of public opinion, of the ideas and standards imposed by the majority, especially in America. Spontaneity

<sup>1</sup>Keats's Works, Buxton Forman edition, III, 230.

usually involves poverty, and in twentieth-century America poverty is regarded as a disgrace. By concentrating the individual on his inner riches spontaneity flouts our national idolatry of competition, and tends to undermine our unquestioning faith in quantitative estimates. In valuing the process above the product it is guilty of irreverence to our Great God Production, and in minimizing the importance of the reception of art by the public it fails to bend the knee to Propaganda, Publicity, and the Press. Worst of all, it casts doubt upon our supreme ideal of "efficiency," as expressed in constant restless movement, by insisting that motion is useful only when it is towards a goal, and that action, to be effective, must follow fruitful contemplation.

There is in fact a religious, almost a mystical element, in the characteristic attitude of spontaneity, that goes sorely against the grain of a people who, like us, pride ourselves upon our "practicality." In its deliberation and detachment it lays an almost intolerable strain upon our impatience. No one has studied the psychological aspect of it more subtly or more helpfully than the late Arthur Clutton-Brock, especially in his two impressive little books, "The Ultimate Belief" and "Studies in Christianity." "The common belief of the western world," he says in the latter, "is that the will is always exercised in action, that it is a will to work a change on external circumstances or on other men, and that this change rightly presents itself to us as the proper purpose of our lives. The contrary belief, the Christian, is that we have to work a change on the passive part of ourselves, on the manner in which we experience people and things. . . . Many artists fail through mere wilfulness. The painter tries to find his picture in the visible world before he has laid his mind open to its beauty. He looks at it as an artist, not as a man. He begins to pick and choose, to arrange and reject, before reality has had time to stir and enrich his mind. . . . But whatever a man's natural gifts, he cannot be an artist without this right passivity." No wonder the ideal of spontaneity is unpopular in the land of business method, self-help, uplift, and the strenuous life.

But the results of its unpopularity are regrettable. It is the denial of spontaneity that has made our American world so hard, so crude, so noisy, so brazen, so monotonous. It is the denial of spontaneity that has filled it with young people bereft of the enthusiasm of youth, and old people devoid of the wisdom of age. It is because they have refused this ideal that we see about us so many young men who might be enriching themselves by the disinterestedness, the passion for quality, and the universal sympathy

of the artist, violating their natures in servitude to a narrow and bitter professionalism. They might be trying to see and express beauty, which can be done only in tranquillity and self-forgetfulness. Instead, they have sharpened themselves to a point in order to "get on," in order to "beat the other fellow." Instead of going out to grass in the wide pastures of the world they have put on blinders, become hacks, and plod along dully in the dust of the highroad to "success." They allow themselves no fructifying leisure, no enriching day-dreams, no casual irresponsible contacts. When they go among people they see only those who may be of use to their "careers," and these only on the side of their worldly power, usually their least human aspect. And then they wonder why their art is thin, inhumane, jaded and dull.

Most of them, of course, fail to reach even the goals so unwisely chosen; they surrender the happiness of the unknown but spontaneous worker in exchange for the disillusion of the middle-aged time-server, not only obscure but also cynical and embittered. But what of the few who "arrive"? Their plight is even more ignominious and tragic, in the measure that their abilities were greater. For since worldly success puts the emphasis all on feverish activity rather than on a rich and loving passivity, artists who "succeed" are apt to deteriorate. As their bank accounts rise their emotional and spiritual resources dwindle. Their sympathies are narrowed, their imaginations starved, by prosperity, with its insidious insulation from human contacts. Strauss, whose alert youth incarnated itself with such immortal vitality in "Till Eulenspiegel," is dulled and vulgarized by bourgeois wealth and ease into the heavy banality of the Alpine Symphony. Debussy marries a rich wife, goes to live on the Avenue du Bois de Boulogne, and rides bored in an expensive motor-car through the streets he once trod with the elasticity of youth and inspiration. Jack London, says Mr. Van Wyck Brooks, "in his egomania, never opened himself to life. His desire was to score, to dominate, to succeed, and for this reason (as he knew very well himself) he failed as an artist." His wife records that in his later years he was able to afford a big red motor-car "to mend the general pace," to satisfy his craving for "Speed! Speed!" as his aborted artistic instincts made him more and more restless. "You know," he wrote a friend, "I never have a moment with myself—am always doing something when I am alone—I shall work till midnight to-night, then bed, and read myself asleep." "From what," asks Mr. Brooks, "was he trying to escape?"<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>"A Reviewer's Note-book," in *The Freeman*, January 4, 1922.

When the Fates wish to annihilate an artist, they must hesitate for their instrument between abject poverty, with its denial of leisure and freedom of spirit, and luxurious ease, with its more subtle corruption and asphyxiation of manhood. Possibly the latter is surer to do the job.

Denials of spontaneity thus have strange repercussions. By depriving the artist of his natural, impulsive satisfactions in the work itself, and concentrating him on derivative and precarious values which he cannot control, they divide and defeat his spirit. He becomes uneasy, dissatisfied, subject to fears, phobias, depressions. And thus paralysing the process of his art, they also blight its product. What might have been free and original becomes hum-drum, conventional; what should have been as rich and various as nature itself, is confined within momentary standards and fleeting fashions. In its restlessness, its starvation for the beauty denied it, art as well as artist seems to cry "Speed! Speed!" It becomes hectic, strained, incapable of repose and of joy. Because we are ourselves contracted, our contemporary arts are bare and thin, devoid of atmosphere, prone to exaggeration, enamored of momentary effects, sensational. Because we are incapable of enthusiasm we feel at home only in irony and burlesque; and unconsciously attempting to rationalize our own shortcomings into universal principles, we condemn all warm emotion as "romantic," all self-transcending sentiment as "Victorian." Finally, having thus emptied our art of all genuine inner life, we are obliged to "jazz it up," as an ugly phrase fittingly describes an absurd process, into a galvanic semblance of life, a St. Vitus parody of purposeful activity, a meaningless stir-about and itch of restlessness, without goal.

"Our new poems, novels, operas, and symphonies," writes Mr. John Jay Chapman in an essay on "Fatigue and Unrest,"<sup>1</sup> "are not as robust as they were in 1850. Hurry was born the day that steam was invented; and though art and letters resisted the acceleration for a couple of generations, they succumbed at last, and are now whirling and scurrying like ferry-boats packed with wide-awake people holding watches in their hands. What makes us happy in art and letters is the power in them that has been unconsciously absorbed by the artist, and is unconsciously conveyed to us in his work. . . . This knack of a loose and dreamy attention seems to be lost to the world for the time being. . . . Contraction kills feeling, and feeling is a gift that must be spontaneous. Our contemporaries are not in sympathy with the

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gentleness and largeness of the elder time. Their tensions require tension; their nervousness, an edge. Our novelists, dramatists, painters, have been hardening their voices and sharpening their pencils. They regard nature and human nature with a cold, deliberate, intellectual eye."

William James, in a letter written in 1868, when he was twenty-six, remarks: "I have been growing lately to feel that a great mistake of my past life . . . is an impatience of *results*. Inexperience of life is the cause of it, and I imagine it is generally an American characteristic. . . . Results should not be too voluntarily aimed at or too busily thought of. They are *sure* to float up of their own accord from a long enough daily work at a given matter; and I think the work as a mere occupation ought to be the primary interest with us."<sup>1</sup> When James says that results are "to float up of their own accord" he evidently means that they are to be what we have called spontaneous, the product of Chapman's "loose and dreamy attention." The intrusion of the impatient will impedes them. "Impatience," as Ghandi has said, "is itself a kind of violence"; and violent willing can only paralyse mental processes by nature involuntary.

Thirty years later James, in his famous essay on "The Gospel of Relaxation,"<sup>2</sup> works out in detail the implications of his early remark: "If we wish our trains of ideation and volition to be copious and varied and effective," he tells us, "we must form the habit of freeing them from the inhibitive influence . . . of egoistic preoccupation about their results. . . . Strong feeling about one's self tends to arrest the free association of one's objective ideas and motor processes. . . . A melancholic patient's mind is fixed as if in a cramp on feelings of his own situation, and the usual varied flow of his thoughts has ceased. . . . It is your relaxed and easy worker, who is in no hurry, and quite thoughtless most of the while of consequences, who is your efficient worker." The upshot of the discussion is this bit of practical advice: "When once a decision is reached and execution is the order of the day, dismiss absolutely all responsibility and care about the outcome. *Unclamp*, in a word, your intellectual and practical machinery, and let it run free; and the service it will do you will be twice as good."

Similarly, in his "Varieties of Religious Experience," James describes certain temperaments to whom the "tense and voluntary attitude" prescribed by conventional moralists "becomes an

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impossible fever and torment. Their machinery refuses to run at all when the bearings are made so hot and the belts so tight." To such people his advice is: "Give up the feeling of responsibility, let go your hold, resign the care of your destiny to higher powers, be genuinely indifferent as to what becomes of it all, and you will find not only that you gain a perfect inward relief, but often also, in addition, the particular goods you sincerely thought you were renouncing. . . . It is but giving your little private convulsive self a rest and finding that a greater self is there. The results . . . of the combined optimism and expectancy . . . remain firm facts of human nature, no matter whether we adopt a theistic, a pantheistic-idealistic, or a medical-materialistic view of their ultimate causal explanation."<sup>1</sup>

### III

It is this feeling of joyful emancipation from petty personal anxieties, of rising to a higher and freer and more exhilarating plane of activity altogether—a feeling, as Stevenson's *De Vauversin* suggests, essentially religious—that breathes so inspiringly from the utterances of all those artists who have achieved a high degree of spontaneity. "I remember in my life happy weeks," confides Emerson to his journal, "when I said to myself, 'I will no longer respect success, or the finishing and exhibition of my work; but every stroke on the work, every step taken in the dark toward it, every defeat, even, shall be sacred and luminous also. Am I not always in the Great Presence? I will not postpone my existence, but be always great and serene with that inspiration.'" Thoreau is more laconic and whimsical, equally noble. "Each man's necessary path," he says, "though as obscure and apparently uneventful as that of a beetle in the grass, is the way to the deepest joys he is susceptible of. Though he converses only with moles and fungi, and disgraces his relatives, it is no matter, if he knows what is steel to his flint."<sup>2</sup> "I want to be ten times less than other people," cried Schumann, "and only be worth something to myself." "We would rather die painting," thought Hunt, "than live doing anything else." And Keats confessed in a letter, "I feel assured I should write from the mere yearning and fondness I have for the beautiful, even if my night's labors should be burnt every morning, and no eye ever rest upon them."

In a letter of John Addington Symonds may be found a more detailed elaboration of the same view: "You know," he

<sup>1</sup>*Ob. cit.*, pp. 109-111.

<sup>2</sup>Thoreau's "Autumn," page 296.

writes, "how little I seek after fame, and how little I value the fame of famous men. You also know how much I value self-effectuation; how I deeply feel it to be the duty of a man to make the best of himself, to use his talents, to make his very defects serve as talents, and to be something for God's sake who made him; in other words, to play his own note in the universal symphony. We have not to ask whether other people will be affected by our written views of this or that; though, for my part, I find now, with every day I live, that my written views have a wide and penetrating influence where often least expected. That is no affair of mine, more than of a sunflower to be yellow, and a butterfly to flutter. The point for us is to bring all parts of ourselves into vital correlation, so that we shall think nothing, write nothing, love nothing, but in relation to the central personality. . . . Whether the world regards that final self-presentation of the man or not seems to me just no matter. As Jenny Lind once said to me, 'I sing to God!' so I say, let us sing to God. And for this end, let us not allow ourselves to be submerged in passion, or our love to lapse in grubbiness; but let us be human beings, horribly imperfect certainly, living for the best effectuation of themselves which they find possible. If all men and women lived like this, the symphony of humanity would be a splendid thing to listen to."<sup>1</sup>

We may be reminded by that saying of Jenny Lind's—"I sing to God"—that all high and spontaneous artistic activity springs from a loyalty to the universal, in forgetfulness of self, essentially religious. In great periods this religious attitude towards art is common to whole societies, and enshrines itself in tradition. In periods of decadence like our own it is preserved only by scattered individuals who devote themselves to keeping the sacred flame alight. The age we live in seems to be too wilful, too full of restless energy, too enslaved by the ideal of "efficiency" and by commercial and scientific ideals generally, to be capable of that "loose and dreamy attention," that rapt delight in the beauty of the world, out of which art springs, or even to desire it. Only individuals, tired of the hollowness and noise of our life, hungry for something more satisfying to the deep instincts in us that insistently demand ultimate values—only scattered individuals can, by understanding their own natures and the nature of art, point the way to something more worth while. In this high function they will be sustained by the happiness that comes with spontaneity. They will be free from the rivalries that poison the

<sup>1</sup>"John Addington Symonds : A Biography," by Horatio F. Brown. London, 1902, p. 460.

lives of so many artists, free from servitude to praise and blame, free from torturing feelings of inferiority, free from the itch for recognition. Contentment in the process of their art will fill their minds, leaving no room for anxiety for its product. Like the roses under Emerson's window, that made no reference to former roses, or to better ones, they will "exist with God to-day." Standing aside from the restless rush and the brazen publicity of our time, they will catch something of the peace of those old mediæval wood-carvers who filled so many obscure corners of Europe with beauty, through fruitful uneventful years. And they will do this not through indifference or disillusion, but through absorption and confidence, and because they are able to say, with full conviction, in the solemn words of John Burroughs:

I stay my haste, I make delays,  
For what avails this eager pace?  
I stand amid the eternal ways,  
And what is mine shall know my face.



## FLAUBERT THE MUSICIAN

By ANDRÉ CŒUROY

**I**N contrast with Slav or Anglo-Saxon or Germanic romanticism, French romanticism has remained musically null. In its most lyrical outbreaks, it was at all times subject to our intellectual traditions, a psychology enamoured of clear ideas and plastic visions. Music, whose essence it never succeeded in penetrating, supplied it only with literary themes: in children of fifteen who love one another, in moonlight and pallor, in azure eyes and angelic smiles, it tells of quivering harps, white hands on ivory keyboards, and voices singing Italian airs. Music, to French romanticism, was nothing more than a form of love; the melodies it loved have been blended with the women who sang them: Graziella, Lucie, La Esmeralda, Consuelo, and even Sylvie. Such writers as Hugo and Gautier regarded it simply as a transposition in sound of the forms of the world of sense. It needed the obscure efforts of Champfleury, the divination of Nerval and the dazzling impetus of Baudelaire for music to be looked upon by writers as a spiritual manifestation, of the same validity *per se* as painting or statuary.

### I

No longer do we at the present time call in question the romanticism of Flaubert; still, if any further proof of it were needed, no clearer one could be found than the part played by music in his work. Alien both by nature and by education to the art of sound, Flaubert obstructed his early literary efforts with the musical litter of romance.

Violin and organ are the main characteristics of the stories he wrote in 1836 and 1837. In 'Un Parfum à sentir' (April, 1836) we see a jealous and unhappy prostitute playing the violin in the streets for a meagre pittance: the pathetic moment is marked by the fall of the violin, which breaks, "giving forth a shrill sound all out of tune." 'La Main de fer' (February, 1837) is embellished by a tirade on the organ, whose "sublime and majestic, pure and plaintive" sounds blend with the "mystic and azure" light. And it is the organ that gives its "poetry" to 'Rêve d'Enfer' (March, 1837). This extraordinary story of an immaterial being, a

celestial spirit flung down to earth "as the final word of creation," develops the fruitful (and hitherto unexhausted) theme of music as the ultimate manifestation of the soul, the interpreter of the ineffable and the supernatural, of the divine and the infernal. One day this immaterial being "wished to be a musician; it had a sublime, strange, fantastic idea which perhaps men would not have understood, though for which Mozart would have endured damnation; an idea of infernal genius, something that makes one ill, that annoys and kills. It began: the distracted crowd stamped and shouted with enthusiasm; then, in trembling silence, flung themselves on the ground and listened. Pure plaintive sounds rose in the nave and lost themselves among the vaulted arches; it was sublime, though only a prelude. It wanted to continue, but it broke the organ in its hands." Under the same inspiration, wherein clearness of form more cruelly accentuates vacuity of thought, Flaubert, the same month, writes another story, 'Quidquid volueris,' a horrifying adventure of an anthropoid ape that kills and violates, and also plays the violin. The passage descriptive of the "diabolical" music of the strange performer may be regarded as one of the most characteristic pieces of this music-romantic literature:

At first the sounds were slow and gentle; the bow just grazed the strings, touching them lightly from bridge to peg, producing scarcely any sound at all; then gradually he became more animated and his head almost touched the case; his brow puckered, his eyes closed and *the bow leapt over the strings in hurried bounds, like an elastic ball; the music was jerky, abounding in shrill notes and piercing cries; as one listened to it, one felt terribly oppressed, as though all the notes were of lead, and had been weighing heavily on one's breast.* Then came bold arpeggios, ascending octaves, rippling notes that melted away like a Gothic spire, hurried leaps, and all this clash of strings and notes producing an empty melody, without time, song or rhythm, vague *hurrying thoughts that followed one another like a band of demons, dreams that passed and fled, impelled by others in endless whirl and unhalting course.*

In the italicised phrases we see how urgent is the need of transposing musical impressions into impressions of movement and form.

This incapacity to struggle with music on any other ground than that of plastic art, this visionary mania which—even in symbolism and with a few exceptions which can be counted on one's fingers—characterises our writers, harmonises with the real nature of Flaubert, who detests sound and receives enjoyment through the eye alone. This he made evident to Madame Pelouze, châtelaine of Chenonceaux, who thought she was giving a worthy

reception on behalf of her favourite writer by inviting the three Jimenez, negro violoncellists from Havana, "with short woolly hair and dressed like caliphs."<sup>1</sup> According to Martineau's account, it was the youngest of the three, Nicasio, who occasioned the hurried departure of Flaubert, ten days only after his arrival, in May, 1878. "Flaubert detested music, and Madame Pelouze made Jimenez play not only every evening and at mealtime, but also in the afternoons, when she set apart an hour or two to listen to the violoncellist. Between four and five o'clock, Flaubert was wont to visit Madame Pelouze. One evening, on his way, he met at the door of the passage the tall, stout negro who also was preparing to enter, 'cello in hand. The good-natured Nicasio, seeing how furious Flaubert was, smiled deprecatingly as he explained in broken French that Madame Pelouze wanted him to play (C'est Mame Peouze qui veut que ze oue). Flaubert did not enter the room. He left the following day."

After all, Flaubert's relations with the musicians of his time were few and far between. It is known that he esteemed Berlioz—as a man—but we do not know what he thought of him as a musician:

There was a man! What hatred of mediocrity, what righteous indignation against the wretched bourgeois, what disdain of the impersonal! . . . I am no longer astonished at the sympathy we felt for each other. Why did I not know him better! I should have worshipped him! [Letter of April 10, 1879.]

Flaubert's friend Louise Colet might easily have made it possible for him to enter the world of music. But he would not do so. She was the wife of Hippolyte Colet, a musician she had met at Madame Récamier's: Chateaubriand helped to bring about the marriage. Eugène de Mirecourt<sup>2</sup> relates that Colet had composed the score of a short *opéra comique* which was given at the home of M. de Castellane about the year 1840. He was also the author of a 'Panharmonie musicale,' which was "highly esteemed by musicians." A professor at the Conservatoire, "skilled in harmony, though unable to compose a song that could be sung," he compelled his pupils to come for private lessons to his own home, and tried to have those who refused expelled from the Conservatoire. Such a practice caused him considerable worry and occasioned home difficulties from which Flaubert

<sup>1</sup>Charles Richard: *Chenonceaux et Gustave Flaubert* (quoted by René Martineau: *Promenades biographiques*).

<sup>2</sup>E. de Mirecourt. *Les Contemporains: Portraits et Silhouettes du 19<sup>e</sup> Siècle*: Louis Colet, 1869.

benefited. Shortly afterwards Colet died, and his wife (1851) remembered him in a number of poems which make no mention of his musical ability.

If we add that Flaubert, at the age of sixteen, fell madly in love with the wife of Schlesinger, the music publisher;—that, in consequence of an erroneous notice of the title of ‘*Madame Bovary*’ in a local newspaper, he almost quarreled with M. Boveri, conductor at the Rouen theatre;—that, on the seventh of July, 1853, he was visited by Azevedo, the musical critic;—and that, in February, 1872, he was introduced to Madame Viardot, we have the sum total of musical happenings in Flaubert’s life. Consequently, in that ‘*Dictionnaire des Idées reçues*’ which he had had in mind since boyhood, and which, in its simple unadorned statement of enormities “*reçues*,” was also a condemnation of the base individuals who harboured them, we are somewhat surprised to find Flaubert condemning musical commonplaces, though they alone could afford nurture to a mind as unmusical as his.

This dictionary contains the following:

Conservatoire.—To take a season-ticket for the Conservatoire is indispensable.

Horn (hunting).—Effective in woods (and over the water at evening).

Dilettante.—Rich man, *abonné* at the Opéra.

Fugue.—No one knows of what this consists; it is certainly, however, very tiresome and very difficult.

Harp.—Produces celestial harmonies. In engravings, is played only on ruins at the edge of a torrent. Shows to advantage the arm and the hand.

Italians.—All musicians, traitors.

Mandoline.—Indispensable for captivating Spanish women.

Music.—Makes one think of all sorts of things. Softens one’s manners; e. g., *La Marseillaise*.

Musician.—The distinctive mark of the true musician is to compose no music, to play no instrument, and to despise *virtuosi*.

Opera (green-room of the).—Mahomet’s paradise on earth.

Orchestra.—A symbol of society; each plays his part and there is a conductor.

Organ.—Raises the soul to God.

Offenbach.—Whenever you hear his name mentioned, you must shut two fingers of the right hand to avert the evil eye. Very Parisian, in great favour.

Piano.—Indispensable for a drawing-room.

Paganini.—Never tuned his violin. Famous for the length of his fingers.

Romances.—The singer of—acceptable to the fair sex.

Wagner.—Sneer at the mention of his name, and make jests about the music of the future.

In reality, Flaubert is musically as much of a bourgeois and a Philistine as those whose idle talk and chatter he ridicules. In a letter to his niece, he requests her in derision to send him a sonata for piano and hunting-horn. Frequently would he engage in battle with a piano-strumming neighbour who, after a deluge of phrases from *Les Martyrs*, would close the instrument with a bang. "Once more," exclaims Coppée, who relates the incident (*Souvenirs*, IX), "literature had affirmed its superiority over music, thanks to the Beethoven of French prose."

## II

Flaubert, however, cared little about being compared with Beethoven. He always asserted that plasticity was the first quality of art. Besides, it is well known that the rhythm of Horace's Odes made him think of "the loins of Greek slaves." In his novels, he never takes his heroes to the concert; he conducts them to the ball, where the violent and rhythmic music incites to gesture. In "*Madame Bovary*" we have the account of a performance of *Lucie de Lammermoor* where mention is made of the grimaces of the actors, but not of the music; and the blind man's song, at the time of Emma's death, is but of strictly romantic importance in contrast. The same may be said of the "musical situations" introduced by Flaubert into his fairy-play *Le Château des Cœurs*, which was never performed.

All the same, Thibaudet maintains, without being too paradoxical, that Flaubert was a symphonist, and quotes the following passage from the "Correspondance" (II, 405):

"To-day, for instance, man and woman together, lover and mistress at the same time, I went for a ride in the forest. It was autumn, and the yellow leaves lay scattered about; I was horses and leaves and wind, the very words that were spoken, and the red sun whose beams kept half closed our love-glistening eyes." (In effect, this is the romantic theory of corresponding sensations.) The amorous afternoon of Rodolphe and Emma, continues Thibaudet,<sup>1</sup> is felt, thought, and expressed as a symphony. Flaubert went even farther in this art. He says of the scene of the Comitium: "If ever the effects of a symphony have been related

in a book, they will be there. There must be *ensemble* howling and shrieking, there must be heard simultaneously the bellowing of bulls, sighs of love, and the counsels of administrators."

The remark is not immaterial. But it does not prove anything in favour of Flaubert's sensibility to music. As one who knows his own language, Flaubert interprets the word symphony according to its etymological sense: the simultaneous emission of several sounds which "bellow all at once." The art of the symphonist is slightly different.

Besides, the persistence of romantic musical themes at this period is such that, even after *Salammbô*—a triumph of form and colour—Flaubert is unable to keep his 'Éducation sentimentale' free from a sort of musical mistiness left over from the works of his youth.<sup>1</sup> Because the hero and heroine, Frédéric and Madame Arnoux, are "sentimental," they are bound to be of a musical temperament. Frédéric "esteemed passion above all else: Werther, René, Franck, Lara, Lélia, and others of more mediocre type, filled him with almost equal enthusiasm. Sometimes it seemed to him that music was alone capable of expressing his mental disturbances; then he would dream of symphonies." Thereupon he hires a piano, and "composes German waltzes." Madame Arnoux, when relating to him her life, speaks of "her passion for music, when she sang at night in her little bedroom." For, like all heroines of romance, she is musical and has "a contralto voice, with caressing intonations and soft zephyr-like effects." At a soirée, accompanied by Rosenwald, the composer, she sings an Italian air, a love-song with sonorous outbursts. Then, in the notation of her song, we note an anxious attempt at realistic detail: "She sent forth three shrill notes, came down again, then gave utterance to one higher than ever, and, after a pause, ended on a pedal point," while at the same time rise plastic images: "She ran up the scales, with trills and arpeggios. *There were certain prolonged notes that seemed held in suspense; others fell like the drippings of a waterfall; and her voice, transcending all trace of jealousy, clove the dead silence and ascended to the blue heavens.*" But this anxiety for realistic detail is not unfair, and even one of Flaubert's friends is found gently emphasising its naïveté. This is Tourgueneff, who, though his appreciation of music was anything but trustworthy (his sarcastic remarks on Glinka in "Smoke" are well known), had been sufficiently in the company of Gounod and the Viardots to prevent him from blundering. In a letter

<sup>1</sup>The first version of 'Éducation sentimentale' is dated 1843. Flaubert was then twenty-two years of age. Twenty years later, many alterations were made in the work.



to Flaubert, written from Bougival and dated the thirteenth of November, 1879, we read as follows:

Are you aware that for the past six days we have delighted in the reading of "Éducation sentimentale"? After what we have already gone through (true, there were novels, if I may mention them, in the "Revue des Deux Mondes"), it is simply marvellous! In this dialogue, however, there is a defect, one only, and that is in the description of the singing of Mademoiselle Arnoux. First, as we imagine her to be, she ought to sing differently and not that style of song; second, a contralto voice cannot try to obtain good results in top notes, the third even higher than the first two; third, it ought to have been definitely stated what particular piece of music she is singing, otherwise the impression given is vague and even somewhat comical, and you did not want that, did you? Still, you may remember the classic line: *Ubi plura nihil in carmine . . .* etc.

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Notwithstanding all this, there is something more and better in Flaubert than uncertain musical variations on fashionable themes. On two or three occasions we find music appearing as a *psychological force*, Frédéric proceeds to interpret existence musically: between Madame Arnoux and Rosanette, he feels himself subjected to two kinds of music, "the one passionate, wanton and amusing; the other grave, almost religious; in simultaneous vibration, they grew louder and louder and gradually blended into one." Assuredly this is but a faint and imperfectly developed psychological touch, though its meaning was not lost. Maupassant took full advantage of music in his writings, while Rod regarded it as sovereign ruler of the life of the soul. One entire branch of the contemporary psychological novel grew from the musical sap, developing, in the person of Madame Lucie Delarue-Mardrus, the dual shoot of blended psychology and romanticism. Thus in a sudden outburst came to pass what Flaubert, instinctively, though feebly and imperfectly, had glimpsed and foreshadowed.

(Authorized translation by Fred Rothwell)

## ON THE ORIGINS OF MUSIC

By ROSARIO SCALERO

THAT transcendental quality which is peculiar to music and, in all periods, among all peoples, at every moment of its age-long evolution, has always been intuitively recognized in its every manifestation, from the most formless and simple up to the most highly organized and complex, from the spontaneous crooning of the child to the most elaborate modern symphony, whether the instinctive utterance of primitive man or an art which, exercised within the bounds of determinate laws, expresses *sub specie musicæ* the spirit of a mature civilization whereof it has become an integral part:—this quality cannot be fully understood without exploring to the very fountainhead of music.

Nevertheless, without establishing the salient points of this transcendent spirit, one can learn why Music was the mother of Poetry, and how she later detached herself from that winged word which she herself had generated, that she might then, by becoming an instrumental idiom, express naught save the essence thereof with that admirable precision and tremendous intensity to which the masterworks of modern symphonic music bear testimony.

In choosing as our point of departure in the evolution of music the Grecian period, as the most modern histories of music—save brief references of an informative nature to anterior epochs—prefer to do, we shall have to trace the course taken by Occidental music down to our own epoch, without penetrating into those other well-nigh recondite matters of which Johannes de Muris makes mention on the very threshold of the musical renaissance, and which, from the vibration of one string up to the capacity for expressing the psychic life of man in its most ineffable, indefinable, fantastic phases, have risen to the typical headship of an art which, in certain stages of its progress—at the advent of Hellenic tragedy, or of the Christian religion—could alone among all the arts express the spiritual life of an entire people.

Indeed, going back to the oldest civilizations in their slow advance from the Orient to inject themselves into the Occidental world, one may note still more clearly that these men of antiquity had perfectly divined the potency of music as a transcendent

essence, which is not the case in times when music assumes a purely esthetic function and acts only indirectly on the spiritual energies of man.

These men, having no fundamental conceptions of music, but endowed with ardent imagination, regarded music as a religious phenomenon, and attributed its origin to mysterious powers in the guise of divers spirits or deities. Such attribution, it is pleasant to note, was preceded in yet more remote—i.e., primitive—epochs by a most singular and significant fact:—music had already been regarded as a natural phenomenon possessing the divine power to control those spirits or deities, benign or malign, as identified with surrounding Nature, propitious or mischievous for man.

At a later period *Ægean* civilization, blended, as suggested above, of artistic elements and forms and tendencies taken over from various civilized and even semi-barbarous peoples of the Mediterranean coasts, transmitted these traditions to the Greek world. The Greeks, while accepting the superhuman origin of music, modified it to suit their age and spirit; engrafting it on autochthonous stocks, on stories, fables and legends from Egypt, Chaldea, Assyria, Phœnicia, they began to describe and represent it through the medium of these tales, and thus, by specializing it more and more, brought it with growing insistency into closer touch with human imagination.

Early Christianity, with its fundamental aversion to the pagan world, could not fully free itself from this supernatural conception; the celebrated manuscript of Sankt Gallen depicts Gregory the Great composing his neumes under the dictation of the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove introducing its bill into the Pope's ear.

The quasi metaphysical intuition of music peculiar to those primitive peoples and the antique civilization, with Greece itself, that, through the medium of the Story, presented with singular force its eminently religious character, suffered only seeming enfeeblement in the course of its evolution. Even when music began to involve itself with esthetic principles, and became an art, and the spontaneous musician was termed artist, and the singer (the man with a true voice, such as the Egyptians of old demanded for their funeral invocations) had transformed himself into the virtuoso, it did not cease to serve as an intermediary betwixt the known and the unknown, between man and God, to enthral the soul of man and bear it away beyond human vicissitudes.—Whence, you ask, does it derive its vast, tremendous power? How

define this art, that has no definite models in the visible and tangible universe, and follow it back to its origins?

In antiquity some great souls had the vision that music, in its essence, was of chiefest interest to the soul of man. Plato, in "Laws," Aristotle, in "Poetics," discussing music in a specific sense, intuitively reached the conclusion that it derives from "soul-states" that possess the power to "reproduce it." Boethius, the Christian consul of Rome, identifies music directly with the human soul: "*Humanam vero musicam quisquis in sese ipsum descendit intelligit*" (he truly understands music who goes down deeply into himself). But these intuitions were never traced to their source; medieval speculators, theorists of the Renaissance, modern musicographers, all considered music from a purely Pythagorean or an exclusively practical viewpoint, or (still worse) dealt with it by anti-philosophical and anti-historical methods and, with the worst of definitions, rendered impassable the way leading to the truth.

But the face of music appeared in all its divine beauty when Arthur Schopenhauer proclaimed, with lofty inspiration, that it expresses the "*universalia ante rem*," that is, primordial things, the original and universal principles whence all created things derive. Hence, music existed "*ante rem*," and man is therefore descended from music itself. In other words, he was an entity before self-revelation revealed him to himself by logical process—a species of religious phenomenon;—by a revelation suggested to him out of the deepest recesses of the human psyche, a region beyond the reach of reason. His essential nature is "pure expression"; with his growth this tends, with ever-increasing intensity, to express not merely the essence of human emotion, but likewise that of inanimate things that man endows with his own feeling.

Following Schopenhauer's discovery, it is no longer an intuitive process whereby we arrive at the sources of expression in which music originally manifested itself, but simply a process of deduction.

First of all, in so far as they refer to the origins of music, the views advanced by Spencer, Darwin, Grosse and Böckel concerning the earliest manifestations of song fall to the ground. These views were based on the principle of sexual selection, or the domination of the physiological impulses. According to these naturalist-philosophers, love was the essential principle in the origination of song; or it was born of the cry of joy or grief of primitive man; or it may have resulted from a physiological law:

—an emotion of an intense nature disposes the vocal organs in a form favorable for song, or this latter may be the outcome of a desire for the facile liberation of superfluous energy.

Apart from the one-sided, adventitious and transitory character of these affirmations and, foremostly, from the impossibility of coördinating (as is necessary) such primitive manifestations of song (and hence, of music) with some principle which should necessarily possess an evolutionary character, we hardly need remark that any song that bursts out of the heart of primitive man in an impetus of love, in the *abandon* of joy, in the anguish of sorrow, cannot be considered as primitive; such song is a resultant which should have precedents; it is, in other terms, pure "melos," and no longer an archetypal and germinative element—a "melos" like the tuneless songs of the birds in forests of remotest antiquity, long before the advent of man, songs which, obeying the same impulses, had undergone no evolutionary crises.

Schopenhauer's definition, which assumes per contra (as observed above) a music preëxistent in man and revealing itself to him before his self-recognition by logical process, obliges us to go back to a time anterior to actual "melos" in our search after the self-revelation of music in concrete terms, that is, in a specific way. This anterior time may be stated as coincident with the first beginnings of the formation of human speech, when it was not yet "logos," hence, precisely in the onomatopœic period. To this period the origins of music are to be referred; escaping from metaphysics to enter upon a field of practical observation, we discover the principle that has guided the evolution of music through countless millenniums in accordance with natural laws.

As we know, the onomatopes—which are the roots and bases of the agglutinative languages, and therefore belong chiefly to the Indo-European group—found, for the phenomena of nature and things, as accurate symbolic verbal correspondence, reproducing phonetically and with an admirably subtle differentiation the impressions received. Now, these onomatopes were not simply mere inflexions, but also most exquisite musical expressions similar to germs of motives. In the course of time, with the amplification and enrichment of the idiom two currents were formed: the one became "logos," whereas the other exalted its original form, refined its sounds, took on a wealth of subtle shadings, developed its germinal motives, and went its way through the resounding aisles of music.

Our speech, such as it is to-day and inasmuch as its sense is almost entirely lost to us, is nothing but a "repressed" musical

phenomenon; that is, its conventional use, and its symbolism (as we said before) now so vague or, indeed, entirely remote from its primary lyrical signification, conceal from us its dual, logico-musical, origin. But whenever, under the domination of strong emotions or needs that overwhelm our faculties of reflection and of common, every-day expression, the word becomes exalted, elevated, emotional, simple and, so to say, "original," then it again has recourse to music, harks back to its lyric source, and reunites itself to that from which it was divorced. The most primitive of our people, not weighed down by reflection or by culture, achieve the miracle perhaps more quickly and naturally than does our modern artist, who requires for his inspiration what we might call a "generally" musical state of mind, ever-present throughout his life. In the Abruzzi, that poetical dreamland of Italy, where time passes more slowly and wearily, and all has a more antique cast, the mother weeping by the bedside of her dead son and apostrophizing him for hours at a time with anguished tenderness, does not speak to him, but "sings" to him with a sorrowful melopœia, now swelling mysteriously, now lost in an emotion for whose expression words are impotent.



After song, there emerges, by a natural law, the instrument; this may be the instrument that would reproduce the inflections of the voice, or one which invents fashions consonant with its nature. Voice and instrument, in their evolutionary course, lending to one another their most peculiar accents, influence each other in the capital epochs of musical history. When such collaboration has been accomplished, each returns to its specific functions. And once more by natural law, in obedience to the principle of its origin, Music creates Verse, wherewith it establishes and differentiates with all subtlety the laws of rhythm. The earliest verses are fragments of connected discourse moulded and reduced to precise measure by a musical phrase. Later, these fragments are set apart as "an harmonious number," and after their pattern are moulded others that now, independently of music, multiply their effects in another manner, "illumine with a different coloration the melodic germ left within them by their generatrix, Music." And it is always by virtue of this origin that we, inverting the phenomenon, that is to say, passing from deduction to intuition, traversing the two modalities that spoken language



possesses and assumes—i.e., from ordinary speech to oratorical enthusiasm—are able to recreate that specific musical tone which, according to primal laws, lies latent in these two modalities, thus elevating the Word to the absolute condition of Music, and, identifying it with this latter, to lead it back to the *universalia ante rem*.

(Translated by Theodore Baker.)

## POSSIBLE SURVIVALS OF AFRICAN SONG IN JAMAICA<sup>1</sup>

By HELEN H. ROBERTS

IN the west-central part of the island of Jamaica there is a large stretch of somewhat wild and unsettled country known as the Cockpit or Maroon country. The first name is descriptive of the conformation of the land, which is a series of very peculiar cone-shaped hills separated from one another by precipitous valley slopes forming the sides of deep pit-like depressions. All of this labyrinthine wilderness is covered by a tropical growth. This, together with the bewildering similarity of hills and valleys with narrow defiles between, made the Cockpit country an ideal stronghold for those negro tribes which, brought as laborers from West Africa by the Spaniards during their century and a half of rule in Jamaica, escaped from the hated slavery at the time of the trouble between Spain and Great Britain over the island, and successfully maintained their independence in these fastnesses.

They became known as the Maroons, but the origin of the name is much disputed.<sup>2</sup> From their refuge for a period of eighty-two years they carried on a guerilla warfare against the British troops which were sent against them,<sup>3</sup> and, it being impossible for the British to subdue them, Governor Trelawney, then Governor of

<sup>1</sup>The funds for field work in Jamaica, and the collecting of songs, were provided by the Folklore Foundation of Vassar College and the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

<sup>2</sup>D. Brymner, "The Jamaica Maroons. How they came to Nova Scotia—How They Left It." Roy. Soc. of Canada, Proceedings and Transactions. 2nd Ser. I, p. 81. This author gives us the following: "The origin of the name 'Maroons' has been the subject of much controversy. Long, in 1774, calls them hog-hunters, from *Marano*, a young pig. The Encyclopédie quoted by Edwards derives it from *Simaron*, an ape, and from their hiding in the woods. Lucas, in his recent work 'A Historical Geography of the British Colonies,' says it is an abbreviation of *Cimaron*, derived from the Spanish or Portuguese *cima*, a mountain-top, and refers to the Encyclopedia Britannica for further information. . . . I am inclined to think, but I give the suggestion with reserve, that the name is a direct application of the word *Marron*, a wild or stray dog. Littré, in his great French dictionary, gives the name as *negre marron*, a fugitive slave who betakes himself to the woods, an explanation which might suit any of the derivations. The question is one of no great importance, but it may be noticed that the Malagasy slaves in Mauritius, imported by the Dutch, were known, when they fled to the woods, by the same name as those in Jamaica." (In the writer's opinion the importance of this remark and some that precede depends altogether on the comparative dates for the use of these terms.)

<sup>3</sup>See Brymner, p. 84, and also Dallas, "History of the Maroons," London, 1803, Printed for T. N. Longman and O. Reis.

the island, concluded a treaty with them in 1738. The occasion of the signing of the treaty must have been one of great satisfaction to the blacks. The story of it has become a legend with the Maroons, embellished with some supernatural features. It was related to us by their chief, who told of how their queen, Nanna, as they called her, during the final struggle preceding the truce, caught the bullets of the soldiers in her hands and thus prevented any casualties in her own ranks, while they in turn destroyed so many British that the latter were obliged to flee. (History does relate that they fled from the scene, leaving their dead and wounded on the field, although it refers to an outbreak under Quaco at a somewhat later date.) The story goes on to tell that the treaty between the Governor and Cudjoe, acting for the Maroons, was signed with blood.

Brymnner, in his article on the deportation of the Maroons to Canada, refers to the treaty. "By this treaty it was stipulated that to one body of them should be assigned in perpetuity 1500, and to another 1000 acres of land. The second clause of the treaty provided for their perpetual freedom." Later there was rebellion among the Maroons themselves, some bands began to cause trouble again for the British and in certain particulars broke the terms of the treaty. There followed a long struggle in which the bands were conquered one by one, captured, and finally, about 1795, when it was supposed that all had given themselves up, deported to Halifax, where they are reported as having been happy and industrious for a short time. Further trouble led to their being taken to Sierra Leone, in Africa, where they formed a Creole class, according to Newland,<sup>1</sup> or gradually worked back to America.

However, some bands must still have remained in hiding in the woods, their power broken by their diminished numbers. Their descendants still occupy the territory originally assigned them, now labelled Crown lands on the maps, but evidently still the property of those particular people. It is no secret that the Maroons, so long as they remain in their own district, govern themselves, and the British apparently have no police authority over them. There is, so far as I know, no British constabulary within their country, no court, no district medical officer, but there is a mission on the southern edge of the territory, not many miles from their chief village of Accompong, so named for one of their chiefs who lived at the time of the earlier struggles. There is also

<sup>1</sup>H. Osman Newland, "Sierra Leone." London, John Bale, Sons and Danielsson, 1916.

a little church in Accompong itself, where services are held frequently by the missionary, or were until his very recent departure. During an outbreak of Kaffir pox, in the winter of 1920-21, this missionary learned of some cases among the Maroons and asked for medical assistance, but it was refused on the grounds that the country was not under the jurisdiction of the British, lying though it does in the middle of the island.

At the present time the Maroons are very peaceful, although now as in earlier days they would be likely to resist all authority except that of their own chief, who is a veritable autocratic leader. They are extremely proud of their feat of withstanding the British, as indeed they may well be, and certainly such a liberty-loving and brave people should command respect. The chief welcomes white visitors, and was especially cordial when he discovered that we were Americans. Nevertheless, the Maroons are not very cordial toward the other negroes who gave themselves up or remained slaves. Brymner states on page 86 of his article that they originally intermarried with the plantation slaves, while they were free under the terms of their treaty with the British before the later outbreak which resulted in the deportation of most of them, but that the children of such marriages followed the condition of their mothers, presumably always slaves. However that may be, at the present time there is comparatively little mixing. They come to trade at the market nearest to Accompong, which is held weekly at a little village with the savory name of Maggoty, on the main line of the railroad. But one train a day each way does not interfere much with the simple rustic life of the people; indeed, many of them do not travel at all, and Maggoty is six miles from Accompong, the last two or three of which are covered by a little footpath through the brush.

It is exactly in such surroundings as these, where at least some bands have kept to themselves since Spain lost the island, and where race pride is strong, that we should expect to find, if anywhere, survivals of ancient customs, lore and songs. It is well known that the slaves were imported to Jamaica from the Gold Coast in western Africa, and that among the tribes represented are the Ibo from the lower Niger, the Coromantin from the Gold Coast, the Hausa, the Mandingo and the Moko, inland from Calabar, the Nago or the Yoruba and the Sobo from the lower Niger.<sup>1</sup>

Evidently the Coromantin or Koromanti were distinguished as a tribe or people for some time, much as the East Indian coolies

<sup>1</sup>See the introduction to Jekyll's "Jamaican Song and Story," written by A. Werner, page x.

are to-day, and it is probable that the others were also. In one song that Jekyll gives, a "Coromanty" man is specially referred to as participating in a fight. (See No. CI.) At the time of Sir Hans Sloane's voyage to Jamaica in 1688 the interest in the Jamaican Koromanti may be gathered from the fact that he gives a number of songs they sang. But probably, as England reduced the slaves to order after the island was taken from the Spaniards and peace reigned, at least in certain districts, the separate tribes intermarried and gradually became merged. To-day practically all traces of the lines of demarcation have become obliterated, but that the population is mixed is shown by the various types of blacks, even where it is most African, as among the Maroons, for instance.

Each tribe has left its mark, even though these marks may now only occasionally be identified and their proper origin determined.

Over the island in general, traces of the negroes' former heritage are to be found in many small particulars, not included in what may be called the negro temperament, although in a neighborhood of large towns and the railroads, particularly in the parts of the island which have been settled longest and most thickly by the whites, these have been much eradicated. One of the most outstanding survivals is that of language. Only a few pure African words are still in daily use and these perhaps in the country districts, but habits of sentence formation and word order are probably largely controlled by African methods of thought. One of the most perplexing peculiarities, to the uninitiated, is the lack of gender, a characteristic trait of such African languages as the Tshi, Ewe, Yoruba and Bantu, according to Werner in his introduction to Jekyll's book. Masculine pronouns are almost universally used indiscriminately for persons of either sex.

To enter into the question of religious and social heritages is beyond the scope of this paper, even did the writer feel sufficiently informed to discuss them. While the missionaries have made great efforts among the people and in many cases their labors have been crowned with real success, it seems even to the most casual observer that with the masses it is but a veneer, and a much clouded one at that. That the negroes attend revival meetings largely for the music and the emotional excitement is plainly evident, and despite the efforts of churches and government combined, the old beliefs contend strongly with the new and often, if not usually, have the preference, or else a hopelessly mixed conception is the result.

Native artistic ability, in the way of crafts, is sadly lacking except for fine weaving, chiefly of hats. But it is in music and the

drama that the negro talent manifests itself. Leaving aside those highly dramatic performances, the revival meetings of all sorts and kinds, the 'peakin' actin' and John Canoe companies, the very general and marked ability to mimic, the love of the spectacular, the conscious strutting which so often betrays the fact that the negro is really playing a part, the keen appreciation of the comic and tragic, we have the undisputed African heritage of the Anansi stories.

Brer Rabbit, as hero of many folk-tales collected from the negroes of our southern States, has become almost a byword of our own nurseries. He, as a character, figures in stories over a large part of Africa, and came over with his creators to brighten their lives in re-living his own as well as in adding to his experiences some others more nearly suited to his new environment. Anansi, now the spider, now the man-hero of Jamaican tales and likewise of tales from parts of Africa from which the Jamaica slaves were taken,<sup>1</sup> is not so well known, although collections of the stories about him have been made for various Folklore societies and published, like Jekyll's book. There has been no Harris for Anansi.

At the present time it is becoming difficult to obtain Anansi stories in many places in the island, especially where white civilization has made its way, or where strong church influence prevails; not that Anansi is condemned by the churches, but merely because he belongs in the category of old-time heathen and "temporal" things which church and government alike are trying to stamp out, and because the younger generation evince a reluctance to tell the stories, or do not know them.

The case is entirely different with the music, which seems to bubble from the ground itself, as African to-day as before the people were transported, at least in that most obvious particular, rhythm. Tunes have also been imported from every available source and we find everything, from the latest music-hall hits (in the neighborhood of the large coast settlements, from which they spread in due time, changed, it is true, to suit a new environment, to nearly all of the island), down to fragments of old English ballads and sailor chanties and, as we shall see, some perhaps even earlier than those, although Spanish songs have apparently not survived. The imported tunes, however, have not been affected so much by African rhythms as one might expect, except the

<sup>1</sup>Werner, p. x, in his introduction to Jekyll's book, remarks: "Anansi figures in West Coast folk-tales, roughly between Cape Verde and Kamerun . . . while among the Bantu his place is taken by Brer Rabbit." He says that many slaves in our southern States were imported from Lower Guinea, but that the British West Indies would seem to have been supplied chiefly from Upper Guinea or the West Coast proper.



hymns, which the negroes seem to have taken to their hearts and made their own, probably the more because they are used nightly at revival meetings of their own managing where emotion runs high and African ceremonial fervor seethes beneath the veneer.

But, as might be imagined, it is in the back-country districts and particularly in that section nearest the Maroon country that the usually clever exploits of that none too scrupulously honorable spider, Anansi, who is always getting into the most embarrassing scrapes or playing mean tricks on his slow-witted neighbors but who sometimes is outdone at his own game, are told and heard with unfeigned delight; and it must be confessed that usually white listeners are as absorbed as black ones. And, although music flows all over Jamaica, it is here, and in the hills of Brownstown, as far removed from railroads as can well be, that the largest number of ballad fragments and sailors' chanties were found, together with many quaint and curious songs of Jamaican origin and negro manufacture. Here, too, even granting that church music might have acquainted the negroes of the entire island with the sound of harmony, although few of them might ever have been trained to its use, we find utterly untaught negroes taking parts in singing as naturally as they laugh, which is as often as some one can be found who will participate. There is no doubt that this part-singing is a real heritage from their old home, for it is well known that travellers in certain parts of Africa have remarked the very striking fact that the savage negroes among whom they journeyed sang parts in choruses with a most beautiful effect of harmony. Myers, in an appendix to Jekyll's book concerning the African element of Jamaican music, says very truly that the greatest bar to drawing any exact parallels lies in our very scant knowledge of African music, which, considering its very high character and novelty of rhythms, has (I may add) been shamefully neglected by such observers as have been in a position to give us more of it. Myers says, on pp. 278-9, "In West Africa music had advanced to part-singing," probably meaning that it had done so without European interference; but he goes on to say that probably there are as many styles of native African music as in Europe. Travellers have reported that in regions not far apart there were surprising differences in natural aptitude for music and in its general character.

In the country districts all over the island songs of labor have developed, and these are nearly always sung in harmony, usually with an antiphonal effect or with a bobbin, which consists in a short refrain taken by one group every now and then, while the

rest of the singers follow the leader, except when he introduces a new and telling verse to the delight of the participants. This bobbin idea, says Myers, is an Angola feature, but antiphonal singing is mentioned by travellers among many other African tribes. The repetition of single short musical phrases with the same words is also African, although it is a feature common to primitive music in many parts of the world. The Jamaica negro likes to sing such phrases over and over, until, as one expressed it to me, "It don' mek no matteh how many time you sing it, you sing it till it get souah to yo' mout'."

As to instruments, Sir Hans Sloane says that the Jamaican negroes of that time had their native instruments, "1, gourds with necks and strung with horsehair, 2, hollowed timber covered with parchment, having a bow for its neck and strings tied longer or shorter." All inquiry for such instruments brought none to light, although a few old people could remember them and one or two thought they might be able to find one. A number of drums are used, such as bass and side drums, and there is one little square one which stands on two legs and is played with the flat palm at the base of the hand and with the broad flat ball of the thumb and fingers in true African fashion; and no doubt the *gumbe*, as this drum is called, had its origin far across the sea. There is a simple flute made usually from bamboo, but it is impossible to say at present whether it has been copied from European pipes and flutes, which are found now even in country districts, or whether it, too, came with the negro to the island. Flutes of the same kind are found in Africa. The jawbone of a horse is used with telling rhythmic effect, not only as Jekyll has heard it, by being rattled, but also by the rubbing of a stick along the teeth. Whether the sheep horn which is sometimes blown takes the place of some African animal's horn, I cannot say. Such horns are used in West Africa. But instruments seem to be used chiefly for the dance-tunes, which are mostly of Scottish origin, and at revivals where drums and triangle often nearly drown the voices of a huge chorus, or at Christmas with the John Canoe companies; not, usually, in the singing in the fields, in every-day amusement, and at work.

The most weird revival meetings, the most primitive John Canoe companies, the *gumbe* and the bamboo flute are all to be found in the Maroon country districts, although there are others equally remote of which the same might be said. It was our purpose to find the most truly native songs and tales, and for that reason we visited the regions which were considered, by common consent of the white people, to be the most primitive. A number

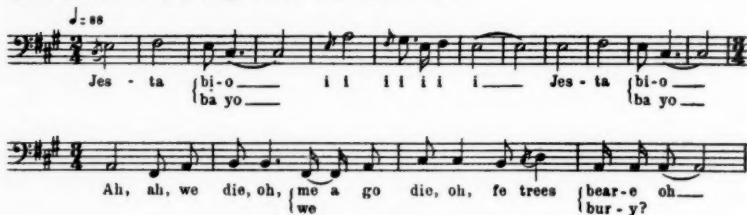
of weeks were spent within a few miles of Accompong, or Maroon Town, as it is often called, and during the second week, when we had taken a brown man's house between Maggoty and Accompong, we had occasion to work with people from all up and down the road, to within two miles of the Maroon settlement, and even with Maroons themselves who heard about us from other negroes on the road. It may be imagined with what interest it was discovered that songs still existed and could be sung by some of the Maroons which they designated as Koromanti songs. Although we obtained many rare fragments of English and old Jamaican songs from people we visited up the road toward the village, it was decided to spend at least a day there in the village itself, to work with those who might be too old or too reserved to come to us.

We were obliged to wait a week, in deference to the wishes of the missionary, who thought that a great gathering could be arranged and we could then learn who were the best singers. For many reasons this proved the worst possible plan, but in the meantime the chief met us some distance from the village to discuss the gathering to be. He was accompanied by several men, and learning of our desire to work with people that same day, dispatched a runner to summon two or three individuals whom he considered good singers of old-time songs. We proceeded to a tiny cottage to await their arrival, and there, while waiting, the chief recounted the glorious deeds of his ancestors in their struggle for freedom. Two or three men who attempted, in ill-advised eagerness, to add details on their own account, were sternly bade to be silent and meekly obeyed. Presently two old women, one certainly past three score and ten, arrived breathless from the long run, to learn the wishes of the chief, but hardly recovered from their weariness and terror sufficiently to be able to sing. No tune at all could be constructed from the labored efforts of the oldest one, and in pity for them I had recourse to taking songs from the men, one of whom knew the Koromanti songs, hoping to have a chance to work with the others in Accompong. But I was destined never to come nearer to the village than I was that day, for by the time the appointed day for the gathering had arrived, a fearful illness from which at first I thought I should never recover had overtaken me, and the remainder of the Koromanti songs were taken for me on the phonograph. A second and much later attempt to return to the Maroons resulted in my being held at Maggoty by almost unprecedentedly heavy rains during which the streams rose so high that it was impossible to reach the hills

except on horseback, and no horse was obtainable. I was obliged to leave before the water subsided.

The specimens that are given here are all that were collected upon the two days, although it is possible that a longer stay and more thorough search might have brought to light many more of the same character. In addition to their being sung chiefly with words and syllables that are not now understood by the people, they are in other respects markedly different from all the others obtained at Accompong or in the vicinity or in other parts of the island. Elsewhere, with but one or two exceptions, no songs were encountered which were in the minor mode, for whatever may be the peculiarities of Jamaican music, the present-day negro seems to have a pronounced preference for major tonality, not only in the songs which he composes, but also in those which he adopts.<sup>1</sup>

Jesta (Koromanti Death Song). Thomas White. Maroon Town.



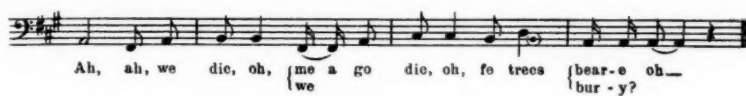
<sup>1</sup>This fact was so striking that I once asked an old man near Maggotty if he could think of any tunes which sounded like the one I was going to sing, and thereupon I improvised a tune in which I introduced all the minor intervals I could, stressing them at every opportunity. That he understood what I meant may be gathered from his behavior. He sat a long time with brows deeply wrinkled in thought. Finally his face brightened and he sang for me a fragment of an American rag-time minor tune, of a sort of which unfortunately there is not a little imported. I told him that that was exactly the kind of a sound I meant, but that the song he had sung came from America, and that I wanted an old-time Jamaican tune with the same sort of "sing," if he could recall one; but he could not.

A somewhat trained and very intelligent singer who proved a valuable informant because she sang the songs of her people just as they did, despite her training in a church choir in Brownstown and her schooling, told me that she knew no Jamaican songs in minor modes. She said they sent cold chills down her spine; she did not like them, nor did she know anyone who did.

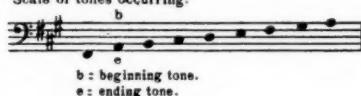
It might be added here that of the numerous ballad fragments collected, not one resembles the Scotch ballads in minor mode of which there were so many in the old country, although Scotch dance-tunes for flute or fife, which are very lively, seem to have been preserved.

Mr. H. E. Krehbiel, on p. 44 of his *Afro-American Folksongs*, quotes Richard F. Burton, in "The Lake Regions of Central Africa," as saying that the negroes there sing in "major rather than the interminable minor of the Asiatic." Also Carl Engel, in his "Introduction to the Study of National Music," says most African melodies are major. Mr. Krehbiel states that of 527 melodies which he analyzed, less than 12 per cent. are minor, "the remainder are major or pentatonic, with a slight infusion in which the mode is unpronounced." These were negro songs from the southern United States.

# Possible Survivals of African Song in Jamaica 349



Scale of tones occurring:



Ah in din row (Koromanti): Song of the Spittle. Thomas White. Maroon Town.



Scale of tones occurring:



## Koromanti

R. 17. Song Sung Around the Grave. Chorus in Unison. Maroon Town. (Beckwith Collection)



ku wa pa ya i i a ti yu a yu a ti yu a yu

pi ti a ka i a ti yu a yu a ti yu a yi

pi a ti a ka i a ye ku ti kua ye kua ti ku a i

ya pa ka i ye ku ti ku ye ku ti kua i ya pa ka i

a ya a yi a ya a yi koti u i koti ku wa pa ya i

a ti yu a yu a ti yu a yu pi ti a ya i

a ti yu a yi a ti yu a yu pi a ti a ka i

u ye ku ti ku ye ku ti ku a i ya pa ka i

Scale of tones occurring:



## Koromanti

R. 48. Anansi Ma Beau (Mabo?). Chorus in Unison. Maroon Town.<sup>1</sup>

A ya yu ma? a ya yu ma? kwa ya gia? bwa

a ye te kwa yi a a yi yi a a yi yi yi

yi i yi i i a yi a yi i yi i i a



# Possible Survivals of African Song in Jamaica 351

yi — ka ya yu ma spa ga yu ma spe gi gwa ya yu ma wa

a ye se wa yi ya a yi ki i yi i yi yi ya a yi spi i

yi (spi i yi?) a yi i i i uwa yi a ka i yi i uwa

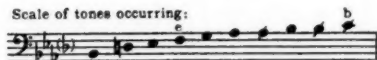
yi kua yuma spe ye yuma spi a pu kua ya yu ma wa a ye se wa

yi ya a yi ki i yi i yi yi ya a yi spi i i yi a yi

i i i i wa yi a yi i yi i i a yi

ka ya yu ma spa ga yu ma spe yi gwa ya yu ma wa etc.

Scale of tones occurring:



## Koromanti

R. 19. Goolin.<sup>1</sup> Thomas White. (Beckwith Record.)

Rubato  $\text{♩} = 72$  rit.

a tempo rit. a tempo rit.

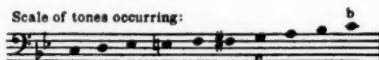
a tempo



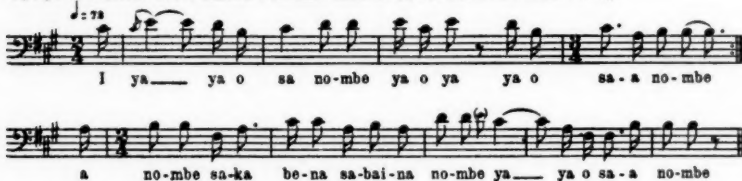
1. The syllables or words accompanying this song were unintelligible when the record was made, from the record, and no text was obtained for the writer.

Jekyll has a song *Gaulin*, but there is nothing resembling this.

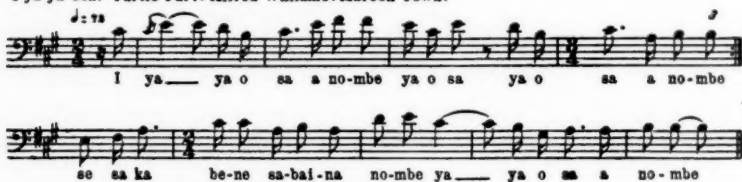
Scale of tones occurring:



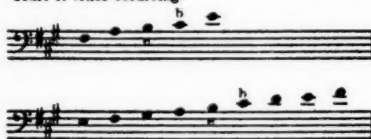
I ya ya o sa. Horse Part. Alfred Williams. Maroon Town. From an Anansi Story.



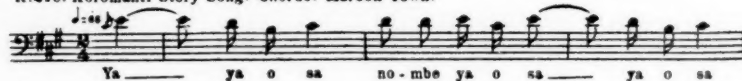
I ya ya o sa. Turtle Part. Alfred Williams. Maroon Town.



Scale of tones occurring:



R. 27c. Koromanti Story Song. Chorus. Maroon Town.

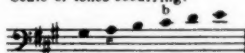


# Possible Survivals of African Song in Jamaica 353

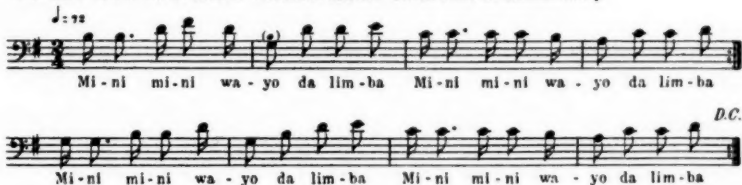


1. The remainder of the record was too poor for transcribing, but the song consisted in other repetitions which were harmonized.

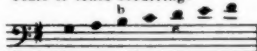
Scale of tones occurring:



Wild Bear In the Wood. Alfred Williams. Maroon Town. From an Anansi Story



Scale of tones occurring:

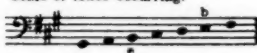


Timbo, Limbo, Same Gal Lydia! Koromanti? Thomas White. Maroon Town. From a Story.



1. Jekyll has a song in which the words Timmo Limmo occur, but otherwise there is no resemblance to this. See "Jamaica Song and Story," p. 114.

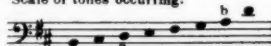
Scale of tones occurring:



Blum blum. Thomas White. Maroon Town. From an Anansi Story.



Scale of tones occurring:



Scales of the songs; transposed to key of C.



Analysis reveals in this little group of Koromanti songs only one which is definitely in the minor mode and follows orthodox procedure, namely *Goolin*, No. 5. Here we have a very interesting play between the harmonic minor and a mixed minor with the flat third, raised sixth and flat seventh. Two others produce the effect of minor tonality, although they are not orthodox in procedure, such as interval progressions, points of rest, frequency of tones, and general song level. The first of these is the *Song Sung around the Grave*, No. 3, where we have in addition to passages which anyone would unhesitatingly assign to F# minor, others which come more nearly to ranking with E major. For this reason, and because of the presence at times of A#, which belongs neither to the scale of F# minor nor to E major, and which does not convert any F# minor passages into F# major, the analysis becomes difficult. I am led to wonder if here we have not again that same peculiar mixed minor scale, this time on C#, but with the two lower notes missing and with the characteristic primitive disregard of

either a major or minor tonic, but the equally characteristic primitive enjoyment of the second and fourth degrees. If the scale might be considered the C# minor mixed, this accounts for the passages in E major as not so far removed, from the standpoint of common tones, while the ending on the second degree of E major or the fourth of C# minor would account for the persistent impression of F# minor which is obtained in some of the passages. The beginning and ending on G# is not thus accounted for, and this tone seems to contend with F# all the way through as a general level or resting-tone of the song. Whatever may be said by way of explanation, there is nothing like this in European music, and nothing at all like it in any other Jamaican songs. It is undoubtedly African, and that it is primitive is evident not only from the points mentioned above, but even more so from the repetition of phrases, and the lack of development. Nevertheless, there is something very pleasing about it.

*Anansi Ma Beau* (?) also hints at minor tonality. This is No. 4. It not only hints at minor but appears to be based on the the same mixed minor scale. The song strongly suggests F minor, but the sixth tone is raised. The melody is grouped around F exactly as the tune of *Goolin* is around G, that is, the raised sixth and the flat seventh occur in the octave below what we should designate as the tonic of the minor. This was also the case with the *Song Sung around the Grave*, No. 3, but there are no tones above what we should consider the tonic of the minor. In *Anansi Ma Beau* unusual prominence is given the fourth degree, as in other cases.

*Jesta*, one of the most beautiful melodies collected, which in its smooth, flowing effect is very different from the majority of the songs, with their quick and syncopated rhythms, also carries a strain of minor, although it cannot be considered to be in that mode. The second half of the song, were it not for the close on the tonic of A major, would certainly be classed as minor, especially after the general character of the first half. It is interesting to compare metric conditions in *Jesta* with those in the *Song Sung around the Grave*. The metre of *Jesta* shifts only once in the middle of the song from duple to triple. That of the grave song shifts almost constantly from a measure of three eighths up to one of five quarters. This is what is always to be expected of simple or primitive music where the tune is but intoned words, the accented syllables of which usually follow no fixed order, but change with each sentence or variation in the ideas expressed. There is little doubt that the great mass of music long remained of this character

before metric regularity came to be appreciated to any extent for its own sake and the words of songs began to be crammed, whether they would or no, into ill-fitting measures, with misplaced accents.

The song *Ah in din row*, No. 2, is in the major mode, but is peculiar in its stress of the second and fourth tones of the scale and particularly in the middle and final endings on the fourth. While the introduction of G $\sharp$  is interesting, it is perhaps more or less in the nature of an accident; other similar passages have G $\sharp$ .

*Ya Ya o sa* is also major. Here we have the dramatic instinct of the negro well illustrated in music. Two animals figure in the story, the horse and the turtle. The first time the horse sings, and, as befits his size and importance, takes what the singer called the lower part. He then gave me the part of the turtle, who is supposed to sing in a higher, thinner voice. Note the difference of the two renderings, and the greater range of the turtle's song. Both are interesting in that they end on the second degree. The other version of *Ya ya o sa* was obtained from a group of singers in Maroon Town. Observe the change in the ending and the more conventional character which is thus imparted. This version much resembles the prevalent Jamaican topical songs, comic or Jamal songs, as the people call them. The light, major quality, the syncopation, the bouncing melody are all quite typical, but the song is said to be Koromanti and the words are unintelligible.

*The Wild Bear in the Wood* I am doubtful about. It is African in general character, but there is nothing of the quality of the first five songs. In movement and major tonality the little tune is very like some of the dance-tunes, especially the *Sha-sha*. However, the words and the exceedingly primitive feature of the repetition of one phrase over and over, and many other points, mark its affiliations, and also the fact that though it ends on a weak beat on the fifth, the accented note of the last measure is on the second degree. That the song has been placed in a story about a Wild Bear in the Wood does not prevent it from being African in origin. Many fragments have been preserved by being incorporated with something foreign to them, and many Anansi stories have become changed in the course of time, animals found in the new environment taking the place of those found in Africa, Brer Rabbit, for instance and a number of others. See Werner, in his introduction to Jekyll's book.

No. 9, *Timbo Limbo*, is again probably African, at least in feeling, but more like the present-day topical songs. I doubt if it is Koromanti, even if only in melody. Although it is major in



tonality it ends on the second degree of the scale and the play between this tone and the fourth is rather pronounced.

*Blum Blum*, No. 10, savors very much of European provenience, although the words may be African, at least in part. The song is conventionally major, beginning on the fifth degree and ending on the tonic.

In summing up it may be said that of the ten songs three are minor in cast and one is strongly tinged with that tonality. The rest are major, one ending on the fourth degree but also stressing the second, one ending on the second degree in two versions but on the tonic in another, one actually on the fifth but on a weak beat, the accented one being the second degree, another on the second, and one on the tonic. Six songs close with an ascending trend of the melody. Seven are sung with totally unintelligible words, counting one in which nothing could be understood on the phonograph, the other three contain occasional English words.

Here is the story of *Jesta* as given to me by Thomas White, the Maroon who sang the song to me in the cottage the day we were awaiting the arrival of the women:

"It was a man dat nebah hab no wife in de house an' he was a hunter man goin' in de wood was huntin' an' a meet up a tree in de wood an' de tree was jessamie tree, grow some pretty flowers an' he said, 'Das a pretty tree' an' him says, 'A wish dis tree could turn a wife fe me' an' as de man wish, de tree turn a wife fe him an' de tree turn a woman in the wood fe him. An' when it turn a woman in de wood fe him he<sup>1</sup> was naked in de wood an' him leab him, an' him went home an' get some pretty dresses, boots an' hat an' him go an' carry it in de woods an' put it on de lady, mek him to be a ladies, an' him carry him home to him house an' him married him as a wife in de house. An' one day he leab him wife in de house an' gone to de wood, gone out shootin' an' atfeh, when him gone, disa nex' man go to his house an' inveigh' away de wife an' carry him away. . . . An' when he went home from de wood de man didn' saw him wife wid his house an' de man was into such a rage dat him didn' see wife in de house. An' de man took away him wife twelb mile off ob him house. An' atfeh de lady went an' go an' leab de house de woman spit an' spit jus' at the do' pos' firs' step at de do' way in de house, an' go to de firs' mile pos' an' spit dere, an' go to anodder mile pos' an' spit dere an' him spit an' spit all de way, Missis, in him goin' on until him ketch to de las' mile pos' an' drop him spit dere. Dat is whe' de man tek him. An'

<sup>1</sup>This refers to the woman. The masculine pronouns are almost invariably used, especially by the country negroes, for designating both genders.

afteh, when de man went in an' didn' see him wife so him begun to wondeh, 'Whe' my wife is?' 'Whe' dat I cyan fin' whe' my wife gone?' an' Missis, an' den now, Missis, now is de song whe' you get dis now, you know, an' den dey rise up an' dey say *Jesta*. When he say 'i i' den him spit on Sateday to de man. So one day an' de man walk out leben miles an' as soon as him got to de twelb miles him found him wife into the nex' man house an' he only went into de house an tek out him wife an' bring him back into him house."

It might seem that there is nothing in the story which explains the words of *Jesta*, nor could any explanation be obtained as to how the song *Ah in din row*, or *Sammy de Conferia*, came to be known to the Maroons as *The Song of the Spittle*. However, this circumstance is not at all unusual, for the ideas of these poor negroes are such a muddle, composed as they are of mere gleanings here and there from the experiences through which they have passed, the tales and religions of the various peoples with whom they have come into contact, slight as that may be, that one seldom finds complete logic in any of their explanations and often, as in this case, apparently, none at all.

White states, however, that the woman's name was *Jesta* and that the man's name was *Berry*. Because bury has more connection with death, and bear with trees, I have used this spelling of the mooted word in the song which may again very well be *Berry*. Final e is often attached to words in singing which in speaking lack it. Certainly the words of the song as it was sung are a queer jumble. The tune has no doubt also undergone many vicissitudes, but as it is now is an extremely beautiful melody, whether it be *Koromanti* or from some other source.

The other most beautiful and weird melodies which are surely African are the *Song Sung Around the Grave*, *Anansi Ma Beau*, and *Goolin*.

## WAGNER, BERLIOZ AND MONSIEUR SCRIBE

TWO COLLABORATIONS THAT MISCARRIED

By J. G. PROD'HOMME

**T**HROUGH the slow but incessant transformations remodeling the Paris of yesterday and earlier times, the landmarks of our predecessors are little by little disappearing before the symbolical pick of the wreckers. And now they have attacked the mansion built by Monsieur Scribe at number 12 in the rue Pigelle, not far from la Trinité; for the dwelling of that prolific playwright had to make room for a theatre which may, perchance, perpetuate his name, if not his works. At the lower end of this quarter, which assumed, under Louis-Philippe, the name of "Nouvelle-Athènes," the New Athens, between the church of la Trinité and Montmartre, M. Scribe departed this life under sufficiently unusual conditions, as noted by the Parisian chronicler Jules Leconte in his "Perron de Tortoni."

One morning the illustrious author felt himself slightly indisposed, and summoned his physician, who advised him to go out and seek diversion, as he found nothing serious in his condition. Towards noon Scribe walked to the rue La Bruyère, where he hired a carriage to take him to the home of M. Auguste Maquet in the rue de Bruxelles. On arriving at the indicated address, the coachman, seeing that his patron did not get out, looked into the carriage and saw M. Scribe lying on the floor. He drove back in all haste to the house in the rue Pigelle. It is needless to describe the sensation created by such a home-coming.

This was, all things considered, a happy ending, such an one as a writer like Scribe, with a half-century of successes behind him, might have desired.

Scribe, "Monsieur Scribe," as he was called for a long time—much as people said "Monsieur Thiers," with a shade of irony—passed away at the age of sixty-six. The son of a silk-merchant in the rue Saint-Denis, at the sign of the Black Cat (which later became the emblem of a celebrated confectioner's shop), Augustin-Eugène Scribe was born the 24th of December, 1791.

This "Parisian of Paris" entered, like so many others, the School of Laws; but he was only twenty when he made his début in the theatre with a failure that was followed by several more; it was *Le Prétendu sans le savoir, ou l'Occasion fait le larron* (The

Suitor without knowing it, or, Opportunity makes Thieves), in collaboration with his friend Germain Delavigne at the Lycée Napoléon (Jan. 13, 1810). But he succeeded better in 1816 with *l'Auberge* and *Encore une Nuit de la Garde Nationale*, two vaudevilles written jointly with Delestre-Poirson. The inauguration, in 1820, of the Théâtre du Gymnase Dramatique, of which Poirson was the first "privileged" director, opened a wide field to the young dramaturge for the ensuing fifteen years, after the Variétés and the Vaudeville. In ten years he wrote more than one hundred and fifty pieces for this stage, later styled the "Théâtre de Madame" (the Duchess de Berry). Vapereau, in the "Dictionnaire des Contemporains," says:

In order to achieve such a result, M. Scribe was obliged to establish a veritable atelier, where a host of ordinary and extraordinary collaborators contributed their several items—one, the idea; a second, the plot; a third, the dialogue; a fourth, couplets. Their leaders were Scribe's old companion, M. Germain Delavigne, and the inseparable Mèlesville; next stood Messrs. H. Dupin, Brazier, Varner, Carmouche, Bayard, Xavier, etc. M. Scribe, endowed for his task with an incredible aptitude and perseverance, supervised everything, directed everything; sometimes he would furnish the sketch, or he would revise and polish the work, or remodel it in part; finally he signed it with his name, but always loyally placed on the playbill the name of his chief collaborator beside his own.

In 1836 Villemain, the *recevant* at the Académie Française, did not fail to notice that his collaborators had always accepted his corrections; "Without them," he added with a trace of spitefulness, "you perhaps would not have written all your pieces, but without you they would not have succeeded."

In 1823 he invaded the stage of the Théâtre-Français, which now has nothing of his on its repertory but *Adrienne Lecouvreur*, written in collaboration with Ernest Legouvé (1849). Novels, in or out of the feuilleton, attracted him, it should be said; and his *Piquillo Alliega* is cited, if not for its literary merit, at least on account of the enormous sum that the journal *Le Siècle* paid him for it—60,000 francs!

As a multimillionaire he gloried in the origin of his fortune; for armorial bearings he chose his pen with the device *Inde fortuna et libertas*. On the door of his seigniorial domain of Séricourt (Seine-et-Marne) may be read this distich:

Le théâtre a payé cet asile champêtre,  
 Vous qui passez, merci, je vous le dois peut-être.  
 (For this retreat without the town the stage has paid;  
 Thanks, passerby! perchance I owe it to your aid.)

And for his tomb this fertile playwright composed the epitaph:

Vivant, j'eus des amis, quelque gloire, un peu d'or,  
 Ci-gît qui fut heureux, et qui l'est plus encore.  
 (While living I had friends, gold, glory, if you will;  
 Here lies one who was happy, and now is happier still.)

Having set his name to over three hundred and fifty pieces, Scribe devised the original scheme of giving them titles whose initials exhaust the letters of the alphabet; thus it came that he wrote *le Kiosque*, *Yelva*, and *la Xacarilla*, with initials that were wanting in his collection. What is left of all that?

Villemain, in the address at the Académie Française above-quoted, said to him:

The secret of your prosperity is, opportunely to have seized the spirit of your age and to have written the kind of comedy which suits it best and bears greatest resemblance to it.

Such a eulogy bears great resemblance to a biting criticism.—A brisk, animated style, neither forceful nor correct; a superficial consideration of manners and morals; no development of the characters, but merely a series of incidents concatenated according to the author's fancy, with a *savoir-faire*, till then unexampled, in the upbuilding of the plot and bringing about the dénouement—such were the defects and the qualities recognized by his own contemporaries in the works of Scribe.

Legouvé, who knew his collaborator well, passed judgment upon his art in a few phrases that have not outlived their pointedness after fifty years. "Scribe," he said, "created a vast number of taking rôles, and produced very few general and significant types." His comedies "provide less in the way of portraits than in stage-settings of Parisian life." His style is simply the jargon of his period (that of the *Restauration*). And finally (according to Legouvé), "Scribe became a tragic and lyric poet without becoming a great versifier and without ceasing to be a song-writer." These last sentences apply especially to the opera-librettist, for Scribe was to the end a vaudevillist, a *chansonnier* (song-writer), even when he took up lofty subjects manifestly beyond the powers of his Muse. In the realm of the libretto for opera or comic opera—and a century ago there prevailed a conception of a dramatic text to be set to music totally different from that of to-day—Scribe was thought to be without a rival. During more than thirty years he, with his collaborators, supplied each and all of our lyric stages and shared in half a hundred great successes of modern music. He begins with *la Neige*, of Auber (1823) and

ends with *l'Africaine*, Meyerbeer's posthumous opera, staged by Fétis in 1865.

With the exception of *Guillaume Tell*, operas, comic operas, ballets, all the works whose titles are still remembered and were comprised between these two dates, bear his signature: *La Dame blanche* (1825), *la Muette de Portici* (1828), *le Comte Ory* (1828), *Fra Diavolo* (1830), *Robert le Diable* (1832), *la Juive* (1835), *le Cheval de bronze* (1835), *les Huguenots* (1836), *l'Ambassadrice* (1837), *la Favorite* (1840), *le Domino noir* (1842), *le Prophète* (1847), *l'Étoile du Nord* (1854), *les Vêpres siciliennes* (1855), *la Circassienne* (1861), etc., etc. *La Nonne sanglante*, of which more anon, apropos of Berlioz, likewise bore his signature, well-nigh indispensable for a production in the Opéra at Paris. From 1828 to 1857 he reigned as monarch over this theatre; just as the lyric tragedy (*la tragédie lyrique*) of Lully is unthinkable apart from Quinault, the "grand opera" of Auber, of Meyerbeer and Halévy cannot be imagined without the collaboration of Scribe and his associates. So it was quite natural that the ambition of a young composer should gravitate towards the auspicious Scribe as towards a sun dispensing light and life; to have him as librettist was an assurance of success, of glory—a guaranty of fortune.

Nevertheless, although Monsieur Scribe had for collaborators the favorite masters of the contemporary public, there were two, acclaimed by posterity as the greatest, who, despite their inclination, were unable to work with the librettist of Meyerbeer. These were Wagner (whom the composer of *les Huguenots* had probably recommended to Scribe), and Berlioz—both of whom, rehabilitated by the whirligig of time, have so completely eclipsed Scribe's musicians and their facile successes and, withal, managed to dispense with the librettist whose aid they had unsuccessfully solicited in the letters given below.—After all, their works were none the worse for that!

\*   \*  
\*

Wagner's letter, followed by the original scenario of *Der fliegende Holländer* (here translated from Wagner's French), was recently discovered by M. P. Paraf among the still unexplored archives of Séricourt. It bears the date of 1840. As we know, Wagner came from Riga to Paris in the autumn of the year preceding, his chief desire being to produce an opera on one of our lyric stages. As early as 1836, while in Königsberg, the youthful composer (then but twenty-three) had sought direct communication



with the master-librettist, sending him the scenario of *Die hohe Braut* (based on König's novel of that name), which he had had translated to that end. To this, Wagner received no reply. In May of the following year he returned to the charge, dispatching to Scribe a second version of *Die hohe Braut*, together with his score of *Das Liebesverbot*, requesting him to submit this latter to Auber or Meyerbeer for their opinion as to its acceptability for Paris. Wagner thought that the work, translated or adapted, might be offered to the Opéra-Comique.

But, as Wagner apprised his friend Lewald in a letter from Riga of Nov. 12, 1838, Scribe again failed to answer. Wagner wrote:

If the subject does not please you, or Scribe—good Lord! I can have another ready in no time. Just now, in fact, I am working on a grand opera, *Rienzi*, which is completed and the first act already composed. This *Rienzi* is undoubtedly far more grandiose than that other subject; I propose to set it to German words so as to see, for once, if it is possible to bring it out within fifty years (should God spare my life) at the Berlin Opera House. Perhaps it will please Scribe, and then *Rienzi* could sing instantan in French; or it might provoke the Berliners to accept it if they were told that the Parisian stage was disposed to take it, but that this time they would be accorded the precedence.

Having finished, in Paris, the scenario of *Der fliegende Holländer*, inspired partly by his stormy voyage across the Baltic, and partly by his perusal of Heine's "Salon," Wagner addressed it to Scribe on May the 6th, 1840. What was the response of the illustrious vaudevillist-librettist? We do not know. Being—as we are assured—so obliging toward the younger generation, it may be that he responded cordially to this young musician recommended by Meyerbeer. We are inclined to believe so, because, in a letter, or note, analyzed by Altmann ("Richard Wagner's Briefe," No. 47) but not dated, we read this line in bad French: "J'espère bien que vous eussiez la bonté de finir votre travail" (I do hope that you will have the goodness to finish your work), which seems to refer to some collaboration, more or less continuous, between the poet and the musician. However this may be, a letter from Wagner to Apel, a long-drawn cry of distress thrown out at his far-away friend in Leipzig, and dated Sept. 10, 1840, apprizes us that Meyerbeer had remained "indefatigably faithful to my interests."

Meyerbeer has remained indefatigably faithful to my interests, but family affairs have unfortunately obliged him to stay abroad most of the time; and as *personal* influence alone is of any use here, this

circumstance could not fail to exercise a paralyzing influence on my affairs.

And he adds, further on:

Paris is too rich, too rich in opportunities and opulent in variety, that it should ever fail to raise fresh hopes. Thus, at the present writing, I stand in rather favorable relations to the *great Opéra* as regards a two- or three-act opera—*Der fliegende Holländer*—having handed in a sketch of its subject which was extremely well received.—What may I not hope for the future?

We know how this matter turned out; the libretto of the *Holländer*, planned at first in one or two acts, was purchased (so the story goes) by the director of the Opéra for 500 francs; Wagner says nothing about it in "Mein Leben," and the theatre archives consulted by M. Georges Servières are equally silent; but the rumor was retailed in musical circles, and Berlioz himself notes it in Chapter LVII of his "Mémoires." This libretto Paul Foucher and Henry Revoil fashioned into a book which, set to music by Dietsch, then chorusmaster and later conductor of the orchestra (in 1861 he conducted the first performances of *Tannhäuser*), and unsuccessfully produced Nov. 9, 1842, under the title of *Le Vaisseau-Fantôme*, disappeared after the eleventh performance. Wagner was avenged.

Wagner himself, in "Mein Leben," mentions that, during the period when Édouard Monnais administered the Opéra after Duponchel threw up the management (though remaining as director of properties), i.e., in the Spring of 1840, he had given a hearing to Monnais and Scribe in the theatre itself of three numbers from *Das Liebesverbot*. Like this hearing, the scenario given further on had only the one aim—to obtain a commission from the Opéra. The letter accompanying it was probably written after one of those fruitless visits as petitioner that Wagner recalls with bitterness having made in Paris during this same month of May, 1840.

With a prospect of approaching wretchedness I felt a positive horror at the smiling spectacle that Paris presented to our eyes under the potent sun of May. For now the unfavorable time for all sorts of artistic undertakings in Paris had arrived; from every door at which I knocked with simulated expectancy I was dismissed with the fearfully monotonous "Monsieur est à la campagne." ("Mein Leben," p. 220.)

In his memoirs the master has but little to say concerning Scribe, whom, for that matter, his friends and confidants had dissuaded him from seeing; they preferred—or, rather, found it easier—to put him in touch with another vaudevillist, Dumersan.

The reason was that Marion Dumersan was not only one of the most fertile of dramatic authors, but that he also performed the weighty functions of Conservator of the Cabinet of Medals at the National Library, an establishment to which the enigmatic Anders, a native of the environs of Coblenz, was attached as an employee in the musical department. It was easier for Anders to bring the youthful Wagner into communication with Dumersan than with Scribe. And it is also likely that it was thanks to Anders rather than to Scribe, as M. Paraf says, and to Meyerbeer, that Wagner was soon enabled to publish articles in Schlesinger's *Gazette Musicale*, in which Anders had just published his "Détails biographiques sur Beethoven, d'après Wegeler et Ries."

Paris, May 8, 1840.

Monsieur,

I should much appreciate your kindness if you would fix an hour when I could have a few minutes' conversation with you. Certainly, it will not be too difficult for you to guess my motive; before speaking to M. Monnais<sup>1</sup> regarding the subject of my request, I am keenly desirous to make sure of your inclination with respect to myself. I have given you to understand, monsieur, what my plan is—it is to have the libretto of a short opera in one act—because I know that the Opéra stands in need of one, and because it must be assumed that such an opera could be accepted and produced far more speedily than a large work. For this reason, monsieur, I take the liberty of offering you herewith the sketch of a subject which, I hardly need assure you, I trust may meet with your approbation. I may be presuming on your kindness in requesting you to be so good as to look through my sketch; on the other hand, I flatter myself that I have earned your good will by sparing you the suffering and horror of hearing me read and pronounce what will, as it is, give you sufficient trouble to understand by reading it yourself.

It is to hear what you may have to say concerning my petition that I beg you to grant me an interview, and more especially to afford me an opportunity to express my deep sense of gratitude for the extraordinary kindness with which you favored my former request to assist at the performance.

I beg to assure you, monsieur, that I thoroughly appreciate how greatly I am indebted to you and shall strive to deserve if only in the slightest degree the courtesy you have shown

Your very humble servant  
RICHARD WAGNER.

25, rue du Helder.

#### The Flying Dutchman (name of a sea-phantom)

Another seven years have passed during which the Dutchman—according to the sailors' legend of the Flying Dutchman—has roamed

<sup>1</sup>Édouard Monnais (seldom "Monnaie"), a literary man born in Paris, May 27, 1798, a lawyer associated in the administration of the Opéra with Léon Fillet (1841-47). He wrote under the pseudonym of Paul Smith.

the seas without rest and without being able to meet with death. From his gloomy ship, with sails of a sanguinary red and a spectral crew that are the terror of mariners in strange waters, he goes ashore to-day. One day, centuries ago, the audacious man had sworn that he would round a certain cape despite contrary winds, and were he to sail for all eternity. Satan took him at his word, and condemned him to be driven eternally by the ocean-waves and unable to find his death.

One sole condition there was, that offered the condemned man a hope of redemption; it was, that he must be delivered by a woman who should be faithful to him even unto death. But this condition was merely a trick whereby Satan gained new victims; for those women who could not remain faithful unto death fell a prey to the devil, and so he could not fail to obtain fresh victims through the vain endeavors of the Dutchman to deliver himself by this means.

To this end the Dutchman was permitted to set foot on land every seventh year. And many indeed were the times that he had essayed this manner of redemption, and many were the times that woman's infidelity had forced him back upon the tides of ocean. Ah! if only he might find his end, even if that end were total extinction.

On the coast he meets a wealthy Scotch merchant, who like himself has just landed. To him he sells some diamonds and exquisite pearls; the Scotchman foresees profit in his purchase; asked, if he has a daughter, he answers affirmatively, and readily arranges for a marriage between the Dutchman and his daughter, as a means of confirming their commercial relations.

This daughter has been brought up since infancy together with a young man, good but poor, who loves her passionately. He, however, fears that he cannot obtain the consent of the rich father of his beloved; besides, he has often been irritated and vexed by a strange, visionary idiosyncrasy of hers, and he has never been able to assure himself whether he is really loved or not. The young girl frequently sits for hours before a singular portrait which hangs in their parlor, and which she contemplates with a mystic enthusiasm. This portrait represents a pale, handsome man clad in a Spanish habit. His features, expressive of profound and ceaseless suffering, have touched her to the depths of her heart. But she has been moved, above all, by hearing an ancient ballad sung often by her nurse, which she herself repeats daily. This ballad tells the terrible fate to which the pale, handsome man represented by the portrait is condemned. But nothing moves her more deeply than the end of the ballad, that discloses the condition for his redemption, and at the same time indicates that till now he had not found a woman who was faithful to him until death; at this point she would be inspired by an extreme exaltation, and exclaim: "I, even I, would be capable of delivering the unhappy victim of fate." Such exclamations were heard with great displeasure by every one else, but no one was more afflicted than the poor young man who loved her so dearly; he would rush out and roam through the forests and over the mountains to shake off his doubts and fears.

It is after such a scene that the father comes home, accompanied by the Dutchman. He informs his daughter forthwith that she is to marry the stranger, who possesses enormous riches; this, together with

his manly bearing and very ancient lineage would doubtless decide her not to reject such a marriage. But the daughter hears nothing of his praises; the aspect of the stranger holds her as if spellbound, she cannot avert her gaze from his. They two are left alone.

The stranger sues for her love. He feels himself profoundly moved by her demeanor; the sight of this young girl recalls memories of his remotest past. Yes—he too had once felt warm love; and, alas! the cruel mockery of the devil has still left him a throbbing heart that he may all the better feel that eternal suffering whereto he was condemned. Can this be she who could be faithful unto death? She declares that she knows but one faithfulness, one even unto death! He seeks to test her by giving her a glimpse, as it were, of his fearful doom, and this only strengthens her determination. Drawn by a vague emotion for which she herself cannot account, she shows herself resolved to fulfill the promise given by her father to the stranger.

Nightfall is near. The father has made arrangements for a festival; his house is situated by the seashore. The ship of the Scotchman and that of the Dutchman are in port, lying close together. Joy reigns on the Scotch vessel; the crew are singing, and drink the health of the betrothed. The aspect of the Dutch vessel offers a strange contrast; a silence as of death broods over it. The merry Scotchmen make fun of this, and ask whether they do not know the ways of sailors? if they never learned to sing and drink? if they belong to the "Flying Dutchman," for their ship certainly looks like it! maybe they have letters they would like to send to their ancestors? etc. These remarks irritate the Dutchman's sailors; they reply that they will be glad to sing a song such as one learns after centuries of wandering on the ocean. They sing an awesome song, strange and terrible; it makes the Scotchmen shiver, and, having vainly tried to overwhelm with gay songs the fearsome chant of the Dutchmen, they fall silent and quit the bridge, making the sign of the cross—which is greeted by a mocking, diabolical laugh from the Dutchmen.

The young girl issues from the house, pursued by her youthful lover. He is desperate. "What have I heard? What have I seen? Is this the recompense of a love long tried and true? Is it really true that you are going to throw yourself away on this stranger who has barely crossed your threshold?"—The young girl is a prey to her emotions: her lover's complaints fill her heart with grief and pity; but she says that it is impossible for her to be his, that such is the will of her father. To this the youth will not listen; he reminds her of their childhood days, of the happy moments in their life when he had felt that she loved him. All this contention is heard by the Holländer. Learning thus that his betrothed is already bound by the ties of an earlier love, he bursts in upon her. Agitated to the utmost, he cries out: "Ah! you can not be faithful now—it is not yet too late, I love you too much to draw you to perdition! Adieu!" The maiden endeavors to hold him back, to assure him that he must not doubt her fidelity, that she belongs to him alone.

The unknown will not give heed; he orders the crew of his ship to weigh anchor and hoist sail, for they are fated to scour the seas eternally. "Yes," he exclaims, "it is your sweet mien that so fills my heart with pity that I must spare you. You love another, and can not be faithful. Be happy; I do not wish your destruction; for, as you know, the woman

who is not faithful to me unto death is damned to all eternity. The number of women that I have drawn into this terrible destiny is already great enough. But you are saved—adieu!" He would hasten off, but she embraces his knees: "Well do I know your doom, but I am she who will deliver you!" He tears himself away: "No! you do not know me!" He points at his ship, whose crew are making ready to sail with frightful celerity, and whose sails are already hoisted: "Look!" he cries, "this ship with its blood-red sails is the terror of sailors, and I am he who is called the Flying Dutchman!" With these words he rushes on board the ship, which instantly starts from shore. The young girl, whom the rest have vainly endeavored to restrain, darts away to the summit of a rock and calls with all her might after the departing Dutchman: "Well do I know that you can be saved only by a woman who is faithful unto death. See, I love you, to you I am faithful unto death!" And as the last word is spoken, she throws herself from the rock into the sea; at the same instant the Dutchman's ship sinks, disappearing in the waves.

\* \* \*

The letters from Berlioz to Scribe carry us forward for a space of seventeen years.

After the nonsuccess of his *Damnation de Faust*, of which he himself had written a good part of the libretto, and which was given twice at the Opéra-Comique, Berlioz undertook a long journey through Russia and Central Europe. Leaving Paris in February, 1847, he returned in July, feeling that he now had a right to win the position that was his due. Léon Pillet was about to resign his office as Director of the Opéra; Duponchel and Nestor Roqueplan sought to succeed him, and, using every endeavor to that end, they applied to Berlioz, who could be of the greatest assistance to them by influencing the ministry, thanks to his relations to Armand Bertin, his chief in the *Journal des Débats*. They promised him the direction of the music and the place of chef d'orchestre. But, once appointed, they soon agreed to rid themselves of the embarrassing personality of Berlioz, who still had an opera to be produced, *La Nonne sanglante*, text by Scribe and Germain Delavigne. Under the pretext that a chef d'orchestre could not, according to the regulations, bring out his own works at that theatre, Duponchel took back Scribe's libretto in order to offer it to some other composer. Following these machinations Berlioz—either "by chance," as he avers, or because he himself instigated them—received propositions to go to London. Negotiations were set on foot between him and the publisher Escudier, who brought about his engagement by Jullien (representing Jullien & Co., 210 Regent St., London) to direct the opera



at Drury Lane, in consideration of £400 per quarter, £400 for a month of concerts, his expenses paid, and £800, payable in eight installments according to the number of representations, for composing an opera on a book by Royer and Vaes. After the signing of this triple contract, Berlioz next day promised Escudier by letter to pay him 1000 francs for each 10,000 (£400) that he should receive by way of compensation, plus 1000 francs payable in rates of 10% of the amounts paid him by Jullien until these reached the sum of 10,000 francs, this with reference to the agreement concerning the opera to be composed.

This Jullien, who was on the eve of bankruptcy, and later became insane, was a bizarre creature well fitted to arouse the enthusiasm of Berlioz. Thirty years of age at the time (he was born at Sisteron, Basses-Alpes, April 23, 1817), he had gone through the Conservatoire in 1833-35 without noticeable results; he then became director of the balls at the Jardin Turc, boulevard du Temple, where his quadrilles (on the *Huguenots*, inter alia) attained an immense vogue. After his failure in 1838, he went to seek fortune in London. He made his first appearance there in the Summer Concerts at Drury Lane, June 8, 1840, at the head of 124 musicians and chorus-singers; the following winter he conducted an orchestra of 170 players, then went over to the English Opera House (the Lyceum) and continued his concerts until 1859, playing extremely miscellaneous programs on which classical music alternated with quadrilles *à la mode*. Jullien had won, by his originality, great popularity on the other side of the Channel, and the concerts he gave throughout Great Britain on several extended tours had no little influence in developing the musical taste of the nation. In 1847 Jullien undertook the direction of Drury Lane, proposing to produce "English" operas. With Berlioz, he engaged Maretzek as chorusmaster, Gye as manager, and Sir Henry Bishop as superintendent at rehearsals. The orchestra and choruses were splendid.

Berlioz was enchanted. Abandoning for the time *La Nonne sanglante* (on which he was working, it would seem, without enthusiasm), he conceived the idea of dramatizing his *Damnation de Faust*, whose ill-reception had deeply wounded him. It appears that, after his return from Russia, he had spoken about it to Scribe, to whom he addressed the following note the day before signing his triple agreement with Jullien:

Paris, Aug. 18, 1847.

My dear Scribe, Mme. Jullien has just arrived in Paris and brings the message to me from her husband that an engagement contracted

with Spohr for his old opera, *Faust*, renders it impossible for him to produce this year two operas on the same subject. So I hasten to inform you of this misadventure, that you may not begin with the work. I shall try to have our *Nonne* brought out in 1849.—Sincerest regards.

H. BERLIOZ.

However, with respect to Jullien, matters soon assumed a different aspect.

Berlioz arrived in London the 6th of November, and four days thereafter wrote to a friend, the Saint-Simonian musician Tajan-Rogé: "Jullien (the director) is a man of audacity and intelligence who knows London and the English better than any one else. He has already made his own fortune, and has taken it into his head to make mine. I let him do as he will so long as he, to attain that aim, employs only such means as art and taste dictate. But I lack faith."

Well might he lack faith while contemplating the extraordinary direction of his sumptuous impresario. Nevertheless, Jullien promised him on his arrival to stage his *Faust*: and Berlioz immediately wrote Scribe:

London, Nov. 12, 1847.

My dear Scribe, the plan for the opera *Faust* is revived; M. Jullien formally announces his intention to mount my work magnificently at the beginning of the second theatrical season, which starts Dec. 1, 1848. We shall have every advantage as regards staging and performance.

I am therefore writing to ask you to fulfill the kind promise made me, to arrange the libretto along the lines of which I sent you a sketch, keeping intact, so far as possible, everything already finished. I think I told you that M. Jullien has offered you 4,000 francs for this work; but please write him directly, or, when answering me, plainly state your terms, in case the above do not suit.

It would be necessary for you to forward me the finished libretto two months from this date, for I shall have to write a good deal of music, and another score is called for by my contract, also for the season of 1848.

I fancy that for you this will be a matter of a week at most and four days at least. Try, in case you undertake this work, to give me as little music as possible to write, because the score as it stands requires two hours and a half. The scene with the horses, that you will find at the end of the printed book, has no terrors for the London machinists; they expect to present it in a very ingenious and dramatic fashion.

If you cannot finish this adaptation of *Faust* in time, or are simply unable to undertake it, you will oblige by sending me without delay the notes and booklet about it which I have forwarded you.

Now, as it will not do to forget Paris entirely, be so kind as to have a serious conversation with the directors of the Opéra with regard to *La Nonne*. Being no longer a member of the administration, I am not amenable to that actual or imaginary paragraph in the regulations that forbade me to compose for that theatre. Therefore, be so good as to

make an explicit arrangement and find out whether I may or may not feel justified in completing this immense score. If they want it, I could not be ready before 1850. If not, I shall employ elsewhere the music already written for the first two acts, and beg you to dispose of your poem as you may think best. You have already shown me only too great consideration in this entire affair, and I should be inexcusable were I to abuse it.

With most cordial greetings, your devoted

H. BERLIOZ.

P. S. The English opera will open by the 8th or 10th of December and continue only three months this season. We have a magnificent orchestra and a chorus of 110 voices; as yet I do not know our English singers, and we are awaiting Mme. Gras-Dorus, Standish, and Pischek, the most admirable actor and singer known to me now in Europe.

M. Jullien's address is Harley St., 76, London. I am living with him.

London, Harley St., 76, Nov. 26, 1847.

My dear Scribe, Jullien has of late been having such difficulties with his theatre, his *bal masqué* and his concerts that he has forgotten to write the letter he promised me to you.<sup>1</sup> Here it is, at last, and I join him in thanking you.

Now I owe you some details concerning the work in question. It should be entitled "*Mephistopheles*," and not "*Faust*." That will lend greater importance to the rôle intended for Pischek, and will obviate comparisons between our work and those of Goethe and Spohr. Pischek is perhaps the grandest dramatic singer of our time; his voice is *incomparable* (baritone); his figure is extremely adaptable, and he has, literally, a body possessed of the devil. In him emotionality is united with a consuming energy; music is his very nature; in short, we cannot imagine anything to be compared with Pischek for such a creation. Besides, as he is not coming to London this winter, we shall enjoy the advantage of his début in our opera at the opening of the second season (1848). But as Pischek can only sing and not speak English, our work will all have to be sung (at least for his rôle). If you include the scene of Valentin's murder, V. might speak. There is one scene that Jullien likes particularly—the scene following the *pastorale* on the plains of Hungary in the first act; the princes of Darkness, assembled to select the one from among them who shall visit the earth to seduce Faust. Lots are drawn, and the name of Mephistopheles is taken from the urn. For this I want a netherworld very sombre, gloomy and silent, in contrast to the *pandæmonium* of the finale. Only at the announcement of the name of Mephistopheles should there be a sort of sudden illumination, short as a lightning-flash, and a terrible outcry of infernal joy.

There must be a grand aria for Pischek; but do you not think that just here it would be brought in too early, and that it would be better to keep it for the third or fourth act, if that could be managed naturally?

Feel no concern as regards changes of scene; here they make as many as five within one act. Pray understand that I do not impose my

<sup>1</sup>This letter or, rather, note is reproduced here after Berlioz's letter.

recitatives on you; and you may reverse the order of the numbers. I fancy that the rôle of Marguerite requires no great development; if you could merely give her the Church Scene with the *Dies irae* and ending (in Goethe) on the words *Voisine votre flacon*, that would suffice;—that, or the Garden Scene with Martha. Faust is sufficiently characterized, I think. We shall have two very original ballets—the aerial dance of the sylphs, and that of the Will-o'-the-wisps around Marguerite's house. Then a vast Pandæmonium, and a final Heaven, in which Jullien intends having a reproduction of the effects in the marvellous pictures of the English apocalyptical painter Martin. My score, as it stands, requires two hours and a half. We must try not to let the entire work take longer than three hours and a quarter. We have a magnificent orchestra and a chorus of 110 voices. You see that we possess the means to do something big.

Now, in reply to your amiable proposal respecting the employment of musical numbers that I wrote for *La Nonne*, I will say that I accept with pleasure and gratitude, but only for a third work (the second of those ordered by Jullien, as I have told you, of MM. Royer and Vaes before I had been requested to write the music for them). Thus I shall not use any part of the two acts of my unfinished score, but await the time when you will be able to give them that frame of art so wholly your own.

I am very glad that you have taken the trouble to bring our Parisian directors to book at last; my position as regards them is now perfectly clear, and I like clear-cut situations. For the rest, as you see, my dear friend, I am dissociating myself more and more from France, whose musical and dramatic usages infect me with an ever-growing disgust. I wish you might come here to spend a few weeks and see how the great dramas are staged; Macready, in particular, obtains surprising effects with his hosts of supernumeraries. At Drury Lane we have the celebrated actor Wallack to take charge of this department, and he is said to be very capable. Here they prefer to group men rather than horses (an interesting "find" made by Duponchel).

Adieu; excuse the length of my letter, and believe me your wholly devoted collaborator and friend,

H. BERLIOZ.

With this letter Berlioz sent the following note from Jullien himself:

London, 76, Harley St., Nov. 25, 1847.

Monsieur, I desire to thank you for your kindness in consenting to revise the opera of *Faust* for the sum of four thousand francs, and at the same time to ask another favour of you, namely, to see that Berlioz gets the libretto before the end of next February, for otherwise our theatrical arrangements will be deranged to my disadvantage.

Relying on your friendly regard for Berlioz, and thanking you for my own part, I beg you to accept the assurance of my highest consideration.

JULLIEN.

Wednesday, Dec. 10, 1847.

My dear Scribe, I did not answer your last letter because I felt sure that our letters had crossed each other. Mine enclosed one from Jullien, written the day after you had written to me.

I forgot to tell you that, in order to throw the qualities of Pischek's singing into still stronger relief, he should be given an aria in two parts, like this:—a tender and melancholy Andante (Mephistopheles, jealous of the happiness of Faust, beloved by Marguerite, should express in three short strophes "Could I but love"—"could I but weep"—"could I but die"), and an Allegro furioso (Mephistopheles then exclaims: "Be it so! Since, love, tears, and even death, are denied me, my portion shall be the immortality of hate, of vengeance, and of rage, and through me may all suffer and curse!").

Be so kind as to place this aria in the third act, if any way possible, or at least in the second, but not in the first.

The opening of the English Grand Opera took place last Monday with brilliant success; the entire English press is singing our praises. Reeves, the tenor, is a pearl of price; his charming and sympathetic voice and animated and expressive features fascinated the audience from the very start. He is a treasure for Jullien. Our choruses and orchestra likewise won brilliant success; and Mme. Gras-Dorus, by means of her skillful vocalization, won their good graces in despite of their national amour-propre.

Adieu. Best wishes,

H. BERLIOZ.

The season on which Berlioz had founded such high hopes did, in fact, open the 6th of December with *Lucia di Lammermoor*, sung in English. It soon came to an end in February with *Le Nozze di Figaro*. "The speculation," says Grove (Dictionary), "was a failure, and though his shop was sold for £8000 to meet the emergency, M. Jullien was bankrupt (April 21, 1848)."

It was during this brief and ill-starred season, followed immediately by the February Revolution in France, that Berlioz planned his never-realized project for putting his *Faust* on the stage. The letters we have just read, to which M. Paul Bonnefon draws attention in *La Revue bleue* for May 10, 1917, while revealing a transient intention of the composer to which no correspondence of his had heretofore given a clue, by no means justify, in our opinion, the *mise en scène*—so ridiculous in certain passages—of *La Damnation de Faust* in the version adopted for some twenty or thirty years by a large number of theatres. The very fact that Berlioz published his score—and that in 1854—as a "légende dramatique," as an "opéra de concert," shows plainly that he had quite given up the idea of dramatizing his Faust.

To these letters to Scribe we add some lines from a letter written in London, Dec. 19, 1847, addressed to Liszt's secretary,

Belloni (according to a catalogue of autographs issued by Liepmannssohn in Berlin, No. 190):

As for *Faust*, it is not engraved, and is just now developing at a terrible rate. For Scribe is arranging it as a grand opera for our next season in London. It will be produced here with a luxury . . . for the music towards the end of December, 1848. This between ourselves; no one in Paris except Scribe knows of these preparations, and I have reasons for keeping them secret.

As to *La Nonne sanglante*, Berlioz abandoned it altogether. First of all, it had been refused by Halévy; then Meyerbeer laid hands upon it; but (if we may trust the *Leipzig Signale* of Feb. 23, 1848) Scribe, knowing how long a time his collaborator required for finishing a score, is said to have remarked: "I am growing old, and I should like to see a performance of my work." After Berlioz, the libretto was directly offered to Félicien David, who declined, finding the time fixed by the management of the Opéra too short. Grisar, Verdi, Clapisson, were approached with equal unsuccess; they all found the dismal tale repellant. Finally, after four years of wandering, the subject attracted Gounod, who, on June 10, 1852, agreed to hand in a complete score by the 1st of December, 1853.

*La Nonne sanglante* was brought out at the Opéra Oct. 18, 1854. Scribe, curious to read the feuilleton of Berlioz, wrote from Séricourt on the 21st to his son-in-law:

My dear friend, will you please, on receiving this letter, have the kindness to subscribe for the *Journal des Débats* for me for three months, dating from the 15th of this present October. Our subscription has expired, and I want to read Berlioz's article on *La Nonne sanglante*. It will be very hard on me, I know in advance, but little do I care. But it may contain erroneous statements which ought to be answered, and this I desire to do as soon as possible.

Berlioz's critique was couched in comparatively moderate terms, and Scribe, well pleased, did not have to address rectifications to the journal.

In his *Mémoires*, confining himself to a restatement of the facts in conformity with the truth, Berlioz simply recalled a very typical observation made by his defaulting collaborator:

When, on my return to Paris (he says), I met Scribe, he seemed a trifle abashed at having accepted my proposition and taken back his poem on *La Nonne*. "But," he said to me, "you know how it is, *il faut que le prêtre vive de l'autel*." Poor man! he really could not wait; he has only two or three hundred thousand francs' income, a town-house, three houses in the country, etc.



When I told this remark of Scribe's to Liszt, he capped it with a witty epigram: "*Oui (dit-il), il faut qu'il vive de l'hôtel!*"—comparing Scribe to a tavern-keeper.

Berlioz might have been more caustic. The failure of *La Nonne sanglante* after eleven representations—like *Le Vaisseau-Fantôme*—sufficiently avenged him for Scribe's manoeuvres.

(Translated by Theodore Baker.)

## MAHOMET AND MUSIC

By FREDERICK H. MARTENS

ISLAM, "perfect resignation of soul and body to the will of God," among the demands it makes on its votaries, insists that they absolutely forswear music while on earth; and the Prophet Mahomet's attempt to do away with music by religious prescription is one of the interesting but inevitably futile attempts to legislate out of existence primal human needs and urges. At bottom, prophets always have shown that indifference or actual aversion for music which reflects the distrust of the man with a message of anything apt to interfere with its delivery. Words, not tones, are a prophet's preoccupation. His words deal with divine love: music is essentially profane and expresses human love; hence, as prophets see them, the two are antipathetic. It is not the prophet, but his followers who reduce his rhapsodic utterances to rules, crystallize them into formulas and harness music to the word of inspiration as the carrier of the idea.

### PROPHETS AND MUSIC

Zoroaster was too busy inculcating the principles of dualism among the ancient Iranian cowboys (in "Thus speaking," to quote Nietzsche and Richard Strauss) to melodize his canticles. He was too much taken up with composing the Zoroastrian bible, the *Zend-Avesta*, written in golden ink on white cowhide—which Alexander the Great, in a wine-illuminated moment, tore from the altar of the Magian temple in Persepolis—to establish a musical ritual.

Buddha, for all his nautch-girls were fragrant as budding champak-flowers, once he had realized the sameness of their embrace, left their lutes and love-songs for forest meditation upon his mission. Stepping softly over their sleeping bodies, not without, as we may read in the *sutras*, some cynical reflections on the unattractiveness of the human sleeper,<sup>1</sup> Buddha hastened to the Uruvela jungle, there gaining saintliness in *silence* until the fame

<sup>1</sup>"He saw that the women had laid aside their instruments and slept. From the mouths of some spittle ran down sullyng their garments, others gnashed their teeth, babbled disconnectedly or slept with mouths wide open, while still others had disarrayed their garments, so that their appearance excited loathing and disgust."

of his holiness "hung in the canopy of the heavens like a great bell." The monks whom Buddha gathered about him had to pledge themselves to abstain from musical comedies, dancing and singing. No prophet can find time for both message and music. Yet no sooner is he gone than those who systematize his teachings see to it that music wreathes his legend with harmonious sound. Thus we learn that no sooner did the Lord of the World (Buddha) set his right foot across the threshold of a city gate, than six-colored rays, glimmering golden-yellow, emanated from his body and irradiated palaces, pagodas and other buildings. Birds, elephants, horses and other beasts stopped where they were, and uttered tones in a sweet voice as well as drums, lutes, other instruments and the jewels folk wore on their persons. The prophet's divine personality called forth symphonies in which all Nature joined whenever he appeared.

Buddhism began, however, without wine, women and song save, in the last instance, depressing primitive hymns like those with which the early Christians woke doleful echoes in the Roman catacombs, congregational singing, inadequately excused by sincerity of devotion, being one of the musical evils persisting through the centuries. Yet, with regard to wine, the form of Buddhism known as *Kala-kakra* turns this "Wheel of Destructive Time" with the aid of native equivalents of rum in orgiastic debauches; and as for women, these "torches"—Buddha called them "torches which light the road to hell"—now burn brightly in the Buddhist monasteries of Nepaul, where the monks marry, justifying the ancient saying that in every church the devil has an altar to the extent of altar-lights, if not the shrine itself.

The Christ, like his fellow-prophets, spares little thought for music. Among his few musical comments is that anent the Prodigal Son, with whom is associated the sound of "music and dancing in his father's house." And when He says: "We have piped for ye and ye have not danced," the word "piped" may be taken in the English seventeenth-century sense which makes the "pipes" the human vocal chords, for the Judean shepherd pipe is mentioned only *metaphorically*, the message is a verbal, not a musical one, to lagging feet unwilling to tread the path it indicated. As in the case of the verbal legacies of other prophets, that of the founder of Christianity has become encysted in the fluid amber of music and, tonally Pasteurized, supplies wings which bear devout spirits to higher altitudes of faith and devotion. Confucius, strictly speaking, was no prophet. He was a classifier, arranger and expounder of the tenets of ancestor-worship as he found them and,

himself an accomplished musician, laid down an elaborate arbitrary system of musical ritual observance based on the axiom that "Music is the harmony of heaven and earth."

There are prophets and prophets. Zoroaster was of princely if not royal blood. Both Buddha and the Christ were sons of kings. Buddha's father was a king of earth, and the father of the Christ only a simple carpenter, yet Joseph's genealogy ran back to the royal line of David. Both Buddha and the Christ had the background of miracle. Christ—if we accept the Fundamentalist view which is most convenient to our argument—was divinely conceived and miraculously born, "The Rose of the World," amid angel choirings and startling departures from the normal on Nature's part. Buddha also was ushered into the world to celestial music. The *Bodhissatta* (Buddha in a state of perfect illumination) entered the Golden House on the Silver Hill near the Anotatta Lake in which his mother Maya lay on her couch, in the shape of a magnificent white elephant, with a trunk the color of a silver lotus, uttered a loud roar, paced thrice around his mother, touched her right side and thus, as it were, entered into her body and was reborn. At the moment of Buddha's rebirth in his mother's body horses neighed harmoniously and elephants trumpeted with dulcet sounds, all instruments made music, albeit untouched, armlets and jewels on human bodies chimed, the heavenly instruments echoed in the ether, and the whole system of the ten thousand worlds turned upon its own axis like a ball of flower-wreaths entwined in fragrance and incense.

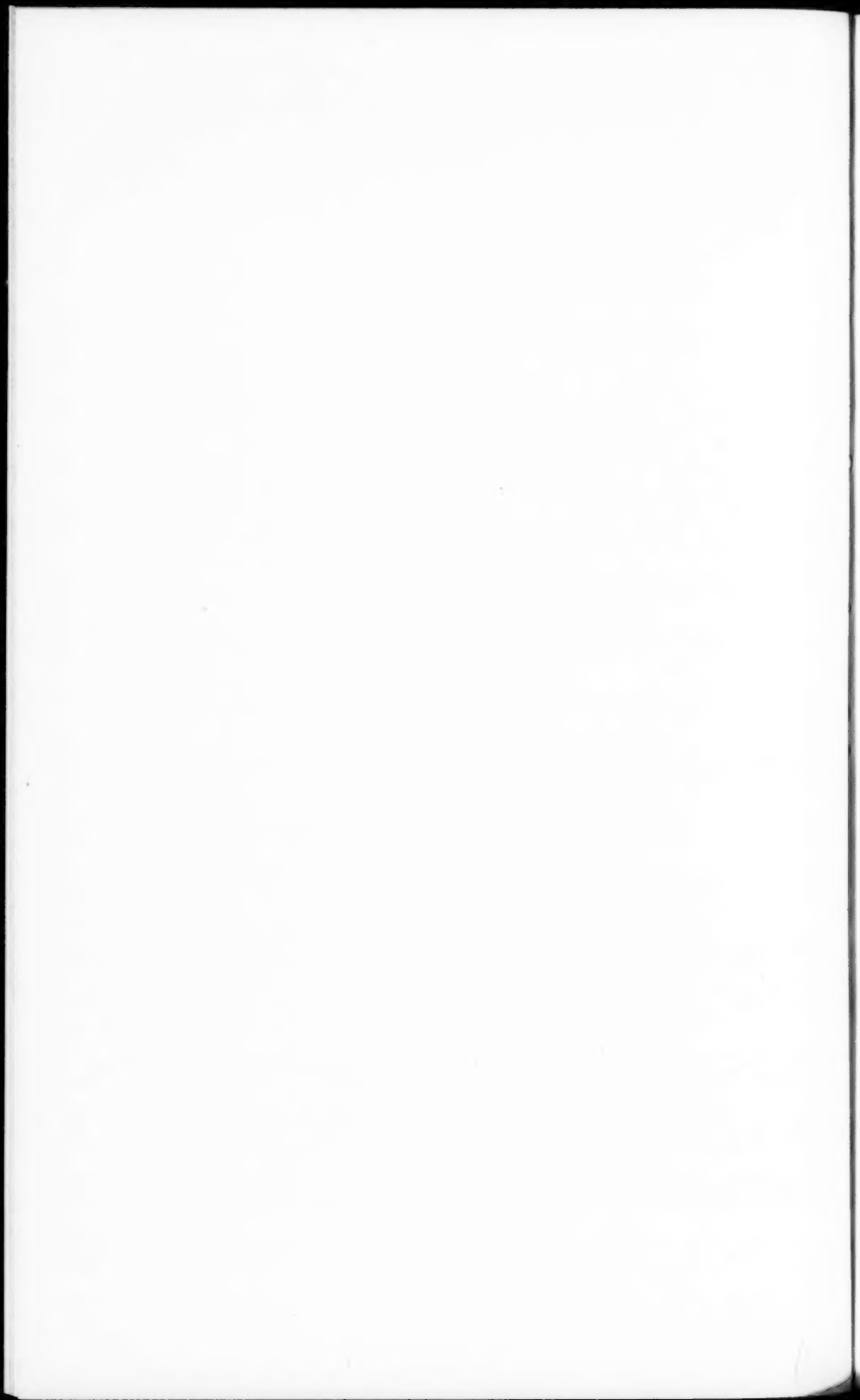
#### THE ORIGIN OF MAHOMET'S HATRED FOR MUSIC

But poor Mahomet? Mahomet, like Topsy, "jes' growed." Buddha and the Christ were actually "foretold" *before* they came; they are to a certain extent documented. Mahomet foretold himself *after* he "arrived." But though, according to the pious Mahomet Ibn Ishak, who wrote the Prophet's life based on the recollections of his disciples, Mahomet, still within his mother Aminah's womb, cast forth so brilliant a radiance that it made the castles of Bosra in Syria visible to the naked Arab eye in the desert, this radiance is an afterglow of the oriental imagination. Mahomet would seem to have been born in the generally accepted human sense, without benefit of divine intervention. What is more, Mahomet was literally a sand if not a "street" Arab, the posthumous child of a father named Wabh, of the Koreish tribe,



Mahomet, the Enemy of Music

(From a supposititious portrait)





a poor orphan whose wits were early sharpened by poverty and misfortune.

Mahomet was the most human of prophets, of the earth earthy; and possibly, the very fact that he remains one of the few men who married thirteen wives without exciting the ridicule of his contemporaries led Voltaire to make him the hero of his famous drama. The Christ walked the waters, Buddha trod the clouds; but Mahomet's feet clung to the solid and material earth. To err is human, and not the least human attribute of this most human of all prophets, who died with his head pillowed in the lap of his favorite wife, begging for a toothpick with his dying breath, was his intense dislike for music.

How did Mahomet's aversion, which bordered on savage hatred of the art of tone, originate? Islamic literature does not afford many hints; we are able only to advance some hypotheses. Childhood impressions are the most lasting and Mahomet, as a boy of fifteen or sixteen, hanging about the black tents of the tribe, and hearing other young Arabs strum a love-lorn lute, may have found music added bitterness to the fact that no one loved him, a wretched nobody, and have conceived an abiding dislike for love-songs. The occasional outburst of wild vocal glee with which an Arab father, trampling down the hot desert sand on the hole he had scraped for his new-born baby daughter, expressed his relief at ridding himself of an economic liability, may have prejudiced Mahomet against songs of praise and jubilation. (He put a stop to this callous custom of girl infanticide when he came to power.) And the one favorite occupational song of the desert, the traditional "driving-song" of the camel-driver, may have become an abomination to him for perfectly natural reasons.

The camel has, what Mahomet so evidently had lost, a deep appreciation of music. For, given an adequate voice, the "driving-song" would rouse it to unheard-of exertions and urge it on through the sea of sand in a very delirium of speed under the stimulus of its melody. There is an Arab tale of a man who was met wringing his hands beneath a palm and who, when asked his trouble, pointed to the bodies of two dead camels and a youth who stood beside them, saying: "This boy has ruined me. He sang the 'driving-song' to yonder camels, and such was the sweetness and excellence of his voice that though burdened with heavy loads, they accomplished a three days' journey in a single night. Alas, then they lay down and died!" Perhaps this tale had a personal application for Mahomet. Perhaps he, when a camel-boy, already visioning a paradise all light and fragrance, had coaxed along his

smelly charges at such speed by his tender, inspired singing that they had died on his hands. And we may be sure that an orphan Arab camel-boy who lost a pair of these valuable animals (a single one of them worth a baker's dozen of girl babies) would be well beaten. Some such trifling yet momentous impression of childhood which maturity never forgot, may well lie at the bottom of Mahomet's whole-souled aversion for music in any shape or form. The tender whimpering of a rival's lute, heard with the knowledge it carried a message to ears the luteless one would fain impress, would suffice to incite a fifteen-year-old Arab boy to homicidal mania, and if his *in loco parentis* applied the hand of retribution to Mahomet's seat of adversity, to use the picturesque terminology of the Orient, merely because he sang too wildly well, he would, if the hand fell with sufficient weight, receive a life-long impression that music was a snare and a curse.

#### MAHOMET'S MUSICAL PROHIBITION

When Mahomet, owing to his marriage to the wealthy widow Khadijah, exchanged a life in Allah's great open spaces for a comfortable cushion in a Mecca green-grocer's shop, he soon felt a call, and turned from radishes to religion, from beans to beatitudes. We cannot follow Mahomet into the bosoms of his family, nor speculate as to whether, had he lived longer, he would have abolished polygamy as a Mahometan article of faith in the light of personal experience. Nor can we devote space to his religious and political activities. We are concerned only with his attitude toward music. There he took a firm and decided stand. Aside from cursing the shepherd pipe (like the camel bell it may have recalled unpleasant memories), he denied that the influence of music on the senses was legitimate, and on earth, where he could hear it, insisted it was a maleficent and demoniac power. Mahomet's attitude toward music may be summed up as follows: For the love of Allah abjure music on earth and you shall wallow in it in heaven!

The Koran, every word of which the majority of Mahometans regard as Allah's inspired utterance, and whose divine origin they defend in darkest Daghestan as zealously and literally as Christians do that of the Bible, is explicit with regard to music and its makers. Somewhere between Allah, Mahomet and those among his companions who wrote down the Koran "from their breasts" as the Arabs say or, to use our own locution, "from memory" (for like Buddha and Christ Mahomet did not "write" his bible,

but communicated it verbally, as is the custom of prophets), the authorship of that book lies. And practically its sole musical concession is the *muezzin's* cantillation, the Mahometan creed and declaration of faith, which still remains the melody-bond of union uniting the seventy-nine odd sects of Islam. If we add to it bird-song—for these innocent creatures of Allah on occasion invade a mosque and there are allowed to praise the Maker in their own way—a few versets of the Koran chanted in unison in the mosque and, finally, the canticle known as the *tellyie*, sung at Mecca during the pilgrimage, we have the sum total of music permitted by the Mahometan religion, which absolutely forbids all other music, vocal or instrumental.

#### MUSIC IN ALLAH'S PARADISE

To offset this musical famine enjoined while on earth, the True Believer enjoys a very feast of music in paradise, vouched for by the Koran itself and in particular by two eminent Mahometan "Fathers of the Church." The treatise on the joys and sorrows of the Mahometan hereafter entitled "The Freshness of the Eyes and the Consolation of Hearts Afflicted," by Abul Leyth of Samarcand (d. 893 A. D.) and Abul Whahab Chazany's "Treatise on the State of the Dead and the Things of the Other World" (written 1502 A. D.), promise "those who have fled music in the world below" ample compensation for all they have missed. For such blessed souls (as indeed for all indwellers of paradise) Friday is music day, and community singing on a splendid scale a feature of its celebration. On Fridays the souls of the Faithful mount their *rafras*, the green, winged steeds of paradise, and ride where Israfil, angel of death, than whom "none has a fairer voice," intones Allah's praise in all keys. And while inhabitants of the seven heavens sway, their bodies bending down and rising to the rhythm of the music, the trees draw near the better to listen, doors swing harmoniously open and shut, great halls and hollow reeds echo suave hymns in soft *tremolo*, and the *houris* sigh forth deliciously tender romances in which angels join to make a symphony sublime.

Nor is Friday the only occasion on which music is heard in Allah's paradise, where, Mahomedan theologians assure us, "the fragrance of musk rises from every immortal body, and where there is only one beard, the beard worn by Moses, the Interlocutor of Allah." The imagination of the inspired epilept has provided a feast of music beyond the dreams of a Juillard bequest,

not only as regards the music itself, but in connection with its interpreters.

The eye, generally speaking, is quicker than the ear, and in Allah's paradise the vision is at once favorably impressed by the personality of the lovely singers who supply the visually and orally ravishing choruses of heaven. We are informed that the *houris* assemble at certain times and sing with voices such as the inhabitants of earth never have heard. In our own golden Sion, also the product of an Oriental imagination, where there is no marrying or giving in marriage, heavens' music seems one vast, eternal monotony of celestial voices and golden harp-tone. The more spiritual Mahometan believes that eternal felicity lies in dwelling face to face with Allah in beatitude, but the garden variety of Islamite is a materialist. And Mahomet, that human prophet, painted his paradise-landscapes with due regard for the great life-urges of his Arab fellows—green oases and sparkling waters, perfumes, jewels, fruits and cooling drinks, horses, camels and—women!

The Mahometan who has safely crossed the hair-thin and razor-sharp judgment-bridge which leads into paradise finds not only his earthly wives (if their conduct on earth has warranted) awaiting him there. As a novelty he knew every Arab would appreciate, Mahomet in addition provides each Believer with seventy-seven and more odd *houris*, dark-eyed damsels of surpassing beauty, their virginity renewed as soon as it is lost, their complexion the color of the egg the ostrich hides in desert sands, their flesh so pure and delicate in substance that their thigh-bones may be seen through it like white veins in a pigeon-blood ruby, their legs so dazzling in whiteness that seventy gossamer robes cannot conceal their radiance. And he added to these patenter attractions voices the greatest concert-singer might envy. Dazzling legs whose radiance no gossamer robes attempt to hide are a commonplace of our own Broadway musical comedy stage; but only in Mahomet's paradise are they wedded to golden *houris* voices. The prophet so arranged that the ear might be charmed while the eye was rested. No paradise offers quite such inducements to the tired business man as that of Mahomet, and the ex-camel driver artfully paid homage to his audience by building his St. Cecilia superstructure on a *houris* foundation.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>It is possible that Planquette, carried away by reading of the *houris* and their wonderful singing, was induced to write his operetta *Le Paradis de Mahomet* (Paris, 1906) in which Parisian chorus-girls probably were more successful in calling forth an optical than a vocal illusion of the divine beings they represented.

The description of a concert in Allah's paradise is not without its attractive features, though we must remember that much of it we owe, not to Mahomet himself, but to authoritative commentaries which almost equal the Koran in sanctity. Those happy mortals who avoided defiling their ears with music on earth, reaped a rich reward above. The *houris*, incomparable virtuosas, are seated amid groves of verdure, on a verandah one hundred years long and forty years broad, formed of a single pearl of purest ray. On an absolutely similar verandah the translated daughters of Eve sat beside the Prophet's cherished daughter Fathma, the Resplendent. As to the men (basses and tenors?) they gather behind Mahomet. In vaudeville to-day fantastic and terrible musical instruments of torture, resplendent with gilding and colors, vicious super-xylophones and other monstrosities, are placed on the stage to be beaten violently in jazz rhythm by young girls. In much the same fashion angels carried in and set down before the *houris* trees hung with flutes. Allah be praised, however, there resemblance to the present-day musical vaudeville act ceased! Instead of a pair of performers rushing out and attacking the unfortunate instruments as the blacksmith does the anvil, a zephyr, blowing from beneath Allah's throne of divine mercy, coaxes enchanting sounds from these flute-fruited palms. Allah himself sits in at the concert, his throne established in a species of "royal box" commanding the *houris* verandah, while below the latter the Believers make themselves comfortable in individual golden thrones on cushions of green satin, while angel ushers pass and repass crying: "Allah begs you not to weary yourselves! He remembers that you have labored aforetime in the prostrations of prayer! Repose yourselves now on your winged thrones, swift as thought. They will bear you wherever you may wish to go, for a spirit moves them!" In these words Mahomet puts into Allah's mouth we have an infinitely human thought. Even in heaven above, the Prophet does now wish anyone to be bored by music, to suffer it unwillingly. For them the way to escape from the heavenly concert is open. Their winged thrones—what a boon they would be to occidental concert-goers on earth who find a programme not to their liking!—will bear them away as rapidly as they wish. Another innovation is what might be termed the hammock or rock-a-bye effect. For "the thrones sway ponderously or lightly, according as the songs the *houris* sing are rapid or more weighty in their rhythms, and oscillate sweetly with the music," running the gamut from *grave* to *prestissimo*—if the latter be admissible in the abode of Divine Majesty.

An intermission during the concert permits of a prize distribution, for with his own omnipotent hand Allah rewards the faithful earthly contemnors of music, that vile and demoniac art which can flourish in purity undefiled only in heaven. Allah hands out to these noble souls who fled music on earth, golden diadems which, at the slightest movement their wearers make, add a new quota of harmonious sounds to those the *houris*' voices afford. Yet, so the learned theologians tell us, the music made by the crowns and jewels the Faithful wear in no wise resembles the horrible clinking of earthly ornaments; but they praise the All High in tones that move the heart. After the intermission, the second half of the programme introduces three great solo artists. The life of the Orient is woman-ruled, yet man always is cast for the solo rôle. In paradise, too, the *houris* only supply the chorus, the *prime donne* are *primi uomini*. The diadems have been distributed, the angels invite the *houris* to sing once more, while the zephyr from Allah's throne sweeps the seventy-thousand flutes which hang from every palm-branch, drawing from them melodies such as mortal never heard and which fill the auditors with ravishment. And then the soloists make their bow.

David—one thinks of him as a heroic tenor—mounts a pulpit and chants ten psalms with a voice equal in power to nine hundred flutes. The One and Only God asks the audience, "Have you ever heard such an organ?" And the Faithful reply they have not, and that it is even to be preferred to the voices of the *houris*. "You shall now hear an even finer voice," Allah continues: "Mahomet, it is your turn to stand forth! Be so good as to chant the *suras* (chapters of the Koran) *Ta-ita* and *Ya-sun*." The Prophet needs no second bidding and his voice is ninety times lovelier than that of David. (This, in view of the fact that Allah's paradise was Mahomet's own creation, is not surprising.) The reaction of the listening Believers is immediate. The assembly is at the height of joy. The thrones rock on their foundations. The lamps of Allah's divine throne, the angels, the *houris*, the *djinns*, the pages and servitors are caught up in a gentle swaying to the music, for none are insensible to the accents of the Prophet, whom Allah bless and grant eternal salvation! "My trusty subjects, have you ever to this day listened to the like?" queries the Living God. "Nay, Lord, not since we were born have we heard a voice so melodious as that of Mahomet," they answer. And then we have another striking evidence of the thoroughly human nature of the godhead this human prophet created. Allah, like any earthly concert-singer, cannot resist the temptation to prove that



his voice is the only really, truly good voice of the entire programme. He steps into the limelight of his own great white throne. "By my glory and majesty," declares Allah, "I will regale you with even better music!" "And God Incomparable Himself sings that *sura* of the Koran known as 'The Cattle.'"<sup>1</sup> As might be expected "inexpressible enthusiasm" seizes the auditors, who are on the point of swooning with pleasure. Angels, *djinns*, palaces, castles, kiosques, belvederes, galleries, balconies, terraces, doors and windows, hangings and portières, pages, *houris*, trees, gardens, oceans of light all tremble at the sound of the Almighty's voice. Paradise sighs with pleasure, and rocks on its foundations, and Allah's throne of divine mercy and heaven with all it holds, animate and inanimate, is caught up in one long rapturous quiver of love and admiration. Nor is this the climax of a concert such as *giaours*, the infidels who read, may never hope to hear on earth below or in heaven above. Allah's encore takes a uniquely Oriental form. While the audience is still enraptured by the closing number, the skies above them open and "a shower of beautiful virgins" rains down on them from the clouds, a graceful souvenir-gesture on Allah's part which must have given rise to frenetic curtain calls.

#### MUSICAL FUNDAMENTALISTS AND MODERNISTS OF ISLAM

Mahomet, having united his followers "in the hope of booty in this world and beatitude in the next," passed from it to revel elsewhere in the music he had so viciously prohibited on earth, and to demonstrate the superiority of the Arabian over the Hebrew voice on the celestial concert-platform. But what became of his prohibition amendment with regard to music? What happened to it is what happens eventually to all legislative enactments, civic or religious, which run counter to primal human urges or, to be more exact, in the case of music, the expressive, stimulant or carrying medium of a primal human urge. The fulmination of a prophet, when opposed to humanity's ingrown instincts, was no more than a dead letter with regard to its general observance, though theologically the Prophet Mahomet's prohibition of music, once the Arabs had established Islam as the dominant faith of a great part of Asia, northern Africa and Spain, developed its Fundamentalists and Modernists. The former, taking the terrible canonical threat that "Whoso listens on earth to music

<sup>1</sup>It may be mentioned that this *sura* comprises no less than 165 versets, which makes it seem to belie its opening peroration, "In the name of God, the *Compassionate*," even if we allow for the fact that Allah is the singer.

or song will be deprived in the world above of the joy of hearing the sublime celestial symphonies and melodious accents of the Most High, Mahomet and David, inexpressible in their suavity," as a point of departure, cited the Prophet's words that "None lifts his voice up in song but what Allah sends two devils to sit on his shoulders and beat his breast with their heels until he refrain," to establish their case. Numerous Mahometan Dr. Johnsons came forward with wise sayings deprecating the evil music does. Ibn Masud declared, "Singing makes hypocrisy spring up in the heart"; Ali Fudayl said, "Singing is one of the scouts of depravity," and Yazad al Walid cried earnestly, "Beware of singing, which maketh modesty to be lacking, increaseth lust and ruineth manly virtue . . . keep it out of the way of women, for singing incites to fornication!" In this drastic opinion he had the support of the medical profession in the person of a famous physician who insisted that "Passionate love is a smoke which ascends into the brain, which sexual intercourse removes and *singing* and *music* stimulates."

The arguments advanced by the Mahometan musical Fundamentalists turned mainly on the evil effect of music on men and, especially, women, and its dangers as an incentive agent to lascivety. In other words, stricter Mahometan theologians, like the founder of their faith, sought to do away with the love-song. It was here that the Prophet's injunctions shattered against a basic human urge and need. The "movie" caption shouts with seemingly tremendous moral force, when demonstrating the depravity of love in its more physical aspects, "Don't call it *love!*" But love in its more physical sense is a primal instinct and need, and among all races and people, primitive, semi-civilized and civilized the love-song, as a more or less idealized natural expression of this instinct, is part and parcel of it. To this must be added the fact that in the Orient in Mahomet's time as in this day, love—as the orientals understand it—plays a larger part in life, is more a business of life than in the Occident. A thousand and one demands, interests, ambitions, inhibitions and what not, born of the complexities of modern civilization, have widened the gulf between the Orient and Occident in this respect through the passing centuries.<sup>1</sup> But love in oriental life still eludes the

<sup>1</sup>Mahomet's social legislation with its establishment of four legitimate wives and an indeterminate number of concubines as the family unit would seem to have made ample allowance for the development of blameless and religiously warranted affection within the family circle. But Mahomet knew his Arabs, knew how soon even a multiple domesticity palls, and how easily the oriental foot would stray from home harem-paddocks to fresh fields and pastures new of romantic fancy if urged by the lure of lute and voice.

harem's bounds, and since the religious tenets of Islam could not root out the quest for love adventure in the oriental, they could not root out the love-song.

As the Saracen civilization grew in luxury, wealth and appreciation music, in fact, flourished with a brilliancy and contempt of the Prophet's injunctions which showed how powerless they were when confronted with the urge for expressing amorous desire, a material desire poetized rather than a chivalrous ideal, in melodious tone. The desert Arab of Mahomet's own day in essence was no different from the musically cultured Bagdadee of the golden age of the Caliph Haroun-al-Raschid. The trampling under-sand with callous heel of a girl baby under economic stress is in no wise incompatible with the possession of a musical soul, singing its passionate adoration of the babe's mother before the babe's advent, with all the ardor that dwells in tender tones. In the days of the Abasside and Ommeyad caliphs and of the Turkish sultans of Egypt, music, love music in particular, remained the need and consolation of the Mahometan peoples, and they cultivated it with a fervor which proves how little the loss of those celestial concerts the Prophet promised music's contemnors meant to them. At the courts of the caliphate, gold and jewels rewarded the singing and playing of virtuoso artists and, though the glories of this brilliant musical civilization are long since a thing of the past, there is abundant testimony as to its splendid development and richness.

The dance, which Mahomet had included with music in his fulminations, reached a high level of art. The various poetized nature dances of the Orient, the *danse du ventre*, the *danse de l'abeille* and others more, which hark back to the sacred fertility dances of the primal East, and the wailing processionals of professional female mourners at funerals, which have their prototype in ancient Syria, Babylon and Chaldea, like the love-song were beyond Mahomet's power to denounce out of existence. Yet he expressly said of the professional women mourners: "Allah abhors above all else the voice of the paid weeper at the instant of sorrow, and the sound of flutes at the moment of rejoicing!" Furthermore, "If a year before death the professional mourner does not repent, she will be clad in a robe woven of Allah's curse, dragged face-downward in the dust to the flames, and her wages paid in hell-fire." Yet to this day the "paid weeper" persists in Mahometan lands.

Mahometan musical Modernists began to argue against the Prophet's injunction almost as soon as he had taken his first bow

as a solo singer on Allah's concert stage. Their arguments were ingenious. The utmost concession Fundamentalist *imams* appeared willing to make was that it did not matter one way or the other whether a Moslem in affliction sang *sadly to and by himself* to cheat his grief. But this concession did not meet the urge which led every Mahometan not tone-deaf to sing his love-song, his mating-song to an audience of one or, perhaps, in view of Islam's multiplicity of wives we should add, one at a time. So the Modernists boldly declared the Prophet did not mean what he said, and that pious music-lover Abu Ali Muhame Muhammed (d. 1299 A. D.) insisted he had seen the Prophet in a vision and that when he had asked him "O Apostle of God, do you blame anyone for listening to singing?" Mahomet—perhaps inclined to leniency by the applause his own vocal efforts had earned in paradise—answered "I blame no one, but say to them they must precede their song and conclude it with a verset of the Koran." This dream-judgment is in keeping with the saying recorded of the Prophet that "Allah listens more intently to a man with a beautiful voice reading the Koran than the master of a singing slave-girl does to her song."

A highly interesting Arabic treatise, "The Book of the Laws of Listening to Music,"<sup>1</sup> by Al-Ghazzali, is an eloquent plea in favor of music and an attempt to prove that the Prophet's musical bark was far worse than his bite. As Al-Ghazzali says: "The inmost thoughts of the heart are treasures of secrets and mines of gems. These thoughts are enfolded in their jewels, as fire is enfolded in iron and stone . . . there is no way of extracting these hidden thoughts save by way of the flint and steel of listening to music and singing, and there is no entrance to the heart save by the ante-chamber of the ear." Al-Ghazzali's work looks at the question from a religious standpoint, and he practically tells the Moslem to let his conscience be his guide in the matter of making or hearing music. "Music and singing are sometimes forbidden and sometimes permissible. They are forbidden to most of mankind, consisting of youths, and those whom the lust of the world so controls that music and singing arouse in them only blameworthy qualities. But they are allowed to him who takes no delight in them except in the pleasure of beautiful sounds. They are permissible to him whom love of God Most High controls and in whom singing and music rouse only praiseworthy qualities." This statement is more subtle than first appears, for the Moslem youth who poured out his throbbing heart in amatory song to the

<sup>1</sup>Translated by Duncan B. MacDonald.

gazelle-eyed girl who had roused it, might well hold that Allah had meant her only for him, that he looked down with beneficent smile on his vocal efforts, and that he was carrying out Allah's manifest will and intention in making them. For a Mahometan conscience works much like any other, and is able to justify almost any of its less spiritual activities on the highest ethical and moral grounds. Some of the tales by means of which Al-Ghazzali illustrates his contentions are charming. There is one of a Fundamentalist who came to Israfel, a modernist of fame, and saw him writing a verse of poetry on the ground with his finger, singing sweetly the while. When Israfel asked his visitor whether he thought it a sin to sing, the other naturally answered "Yes," to which Israfel replied, "Then you have no heart!" Less convincing, somehow, is the legend that David, when he sang his psalms of lamentation to an enthralled audience of men and *djinns*, wild beasts and birds, sang with a voice of such exceeding loveliness "that there were wont to be carried from the place of assembly four hundred corpses on occasion—slain by very ecstasy!" We cannot but question whether it really was "ecstasy" which slew these concert-goers, and knowing that legend is one of the best tone-production agencies and vocal emollients in existence, we long for the impartial testimony of a phonographic record, to allow us to "check up" on this record of raptured musical mortality.

More convincing is a tale which gives a glimpse of the Prophet's private life. As Mahomet's wives accumulated, his peace of mind began to decay. Hardly a day went by when the Prophet's harem was not in an uproar owing to the quarrels of nine contending wives and divers concubines. Only on occasion did Mahomet's intimate personal relations with Allah permit him to throw an inspired fit to clear or thicken the home atmosphere. When he took a fancy to Zeinab, wife of his adopted son Zaid, a chapter of the Koran conveniently put forth justified his marrying her away from her husband to himself. And when Ayesha, youngest and best beloved wife of the venerable father of his faith (his three sons died in infancy) was accused of adultery, Allah again came to the rescue and refuted the accusation by a divine revelation. But Allah was not of much avail in the harem mutiny incited by Mahomet's homely wife Hafsa, Omar's daughter, when he showed too much favor to Mary, a charming Coptic slave sent him from the Nile banks, and that peace of God which passed the understanding of his harem was something the Prophet did not expect to find on earth. Most of all Mahomet probably dreaded the little "daily dozen" quarrels which disturbed his apostolic

harem. Nothing bears more eloquent testimony to this, than the fact that in order to side-step one of them the Prophet was perfectly willing to beg the question of the sinfulness of music and, no doubt, anything else for that matter.

The story is Ayesha's story—Ayesha who, as young women will, liked music, and enjoyed the sight of Abyssinian converts dancing in the mosque of Mecca as a profane rather than a religious spectacle—and shows to what lengths Mahomet was willing to go for the sake of a quiet life. Ayesha was the daughter of Abu Bekr, who took his religion seriously and strictly without music. Says Ayesha: "The Apostle of God came in to me one day while two slave-girls who were with me were singing the song of 'The Day of Buath' (a famous old Arab tribal battle). Then Abu Bekr entered and rebuked me, saying: 'The pipe of the devil sounds in the presence of the Apostle of God!'" Even at this distant day we seem to hear the echo of the weary sigh with which Mahomet turned to Abu Bekr, and said: "Let her alone!" adding, as an afterthought, that it was a day of festival. It was not a question with the Prophet whether or not music was sinful. For the moment he did not care. The one thing on his mind was to nip in the bud one of those interminable discussions in which thirteen women would take sides and (while Abu Bekr made his escape) appeal individually to him for a fair and just decision.

#### THE FAILURE OF MAHOMET'S ANTI-MUSICAL STATUTES

Everything tends to show that Mahomet's anti-musical statutes were practically ignored before he had been dead fifty years. The secular love-song which, "since the voice of woman is unlawful when there is fear of temptation" and because this "fear of temptation" must exist—Mahomet knew women from intimate experience—wherever a woman raised her voice, he was so desirous of suppressing, flourished in rankest luxuriance everywhere in every Mahometan land. Mahomet's intentions were of the purest. He wished no Mahometan to be led astray, to be tempted to sing himself or to be sung or luted into amatory relations with the fair sex exceeding the liberal canonical allotment. But prophets propose and men dispose of their proposals. The poets and romancers of the Mahometan Orient, from the earlier days of Islam attest the general popularity of music, instrumental and vocal, in their writings.

In vain such pious writers as the Cadi Aby Bekr ben Alarbi cried with righteous indignation: "They go about the earth in



their pilgrimages playing *atabals* (cymbals), *zakikas* and *dulzainas* without respect for the rules of the house of God and even in the *Caaba*, and the *Zemzen* (the enclosure of the Holy Well in Mecca) and before the throne their profane instruments resound!" Profane instruments, voices and texts resounded in all places. The Cadi Abutayb Altabar said: "The Prophet Mahomet would have come to earth in another land, if in his day they had played the *taf-taf*" (an instrument whose very name suggests naughtiness). Alas, in accordance with the saying the Arabs of Yemen brought with them out of the desert: "At night, by the light of the moon, the troop of festive youths declare their amorous desires to the sound of the *mizhar*" (a five-stringed lute). Curious distinctions were sometimes drawn between certain instruments. The poet Abimuza cries: "Ah, how different is David's *mizamir* (psaltery) from the *mizmar* (a form used by the youths of the streets) which are played by the sons of strumpets!" And while the sect of the Safeists declared that it was sinful to play the *safico*, a species of flute, since its music was the music of dissolution, Abu Oveid insisted that [the flute known as the *kinora* was so delightful an instrument that its discovery by man was due to the inspiration of God.

And no matter what narrower Fundamentalists might say or write, "festive youths" still continued to express their amorous desires musically in the light of the moon in the lands which had accepted Mahomet's gospel. The earlier caliphs, under the silencing spell of the Prophet's anti-musical pronouncements and because their energies were mainly bent on consolidating the conquests of Islam, did not spare thought to the sins of sound. But later caliphs lent their spiritual sanction as heads of Islam to the cult of profane melody. The Caliph Moyawiwa was the last of the pious caliphs who shut his ears to music. His son Yadiz (680 A. D.) is accused of drinking date-wine and drinking in music with equal ardor, and scandalous tales are related of his drunken orgies with Bedouin sheiks and musicians. By the time of the Caliph Walid (who reigned during the Moslem conquest of Spain) and who did not hesitate, when rebuilding the mosque of Medina, to demolish the apartments in which Mahomet and his wives led their lives of holiness, the singing-girl had already crept into the caliphal palace and was doing her evil worst. The Caliph Yazid II was already so addicted (720-724) to music that when his favorite court singer Hababa died he only survived the loss of her voice by a few days. The last Ommeyyad caliphs were all music-loving. Walid II "cultivated music and the like,"

a phrase which admits of wide latitude in interpretation, and with his three successors came to an evil end.

Among Abbasid caliphs Amin, who succeeded Haroun-al-Raschid, busied himself mainly with his harem duties, music, wine, fishing and polo during five disastrous years of rule, and Motawakkil made music an adjunct to his revels in the magnificent palace he built outside Bagdad. A pretty story has been handed down of the Caliph Motawakkil. Among his many slaves and concubines who, Greek, Abyssinian, Arabian and girls of other races, numbered more than four thousand, was one from Basrah, named Mahbubah, exceedingly beautiful and gracious, who possessed a wonderful voice and great skill in lute-playing. Motawakkil became so attached to her that he could not dispense with her, and seeing this, she became arrogant and imperious and once so enraged Motawakkil that he forbade anyone in the palace to speak to her. When some days had passed, he dreamt they had become reconciled, and went to the door of her chamber in the harem where she was singing, accompanying herself on the lute. And her song was: "I go about in the palace and none speak to me, no ear hears my plaint, as though I had committed a crime for which there is no atonement. Ah, if only some one would intercede for me with the Commander of the Faithful, who has appeared to me in a dream and forgiven me! Alas, the morning dawns again and I am still an outcast!" The Caliph, struck by the similarity of their dreams, entered and forgave her and they were happy as before. Mahbubah so loved him that she had his name graven in her cheeks, and when he died she alone among his slaves was inconsolable until she, too, died and was buried beside him. Mostasun, the last Abbasid caliph, passed from life to the sound of Tartar pipes after Bagdad had been stormed by the Mongols.

Among the Abbasid caliphs Haroun-al-Raschid, the contemporary of Charlemagne, is best-known; and of him the historian Fakhr-Eddin says: "The court of no other caliph comprised such a gathering of scholars, poets, jurists, grammarians, *cadis*, writers, professional entertainers and musicians." A few echoes from "The Thousand Nights and One Night" will suffice to give an idea of how music was regarded by Islam in his day.

In the "Tale of the Three Calendars," when these dervishes enter the dwelling in which the three sisters are making merry with the door-keeper who is their guest, "the Calendars asked for musical instruments; and the girl who had opened the door brought them a tambourine, a lute and a Persian harp. The Calendars



A female sinner against the Prophet's law in the act of transgression

(From an old Persian miniature illustrating an Arabian Nights' Tale)



took the instruments, tuned them and at once commenced to play and sing, but the girls sang with such clear, agreeable voices that they cast those of the Calendars' into the shade." And later, when Haroun-al-Raschid had joined the guests, one of the girls went into an adjoining room and returning with a case of yellow satin decorated with silk tassels and all sorts of gold embroidery, took from it a lute, laid it in her lap and, having thoroughly tuned it, sang a song commencing thus: "O my beloved, you my one longing, you my one yearning, in you only bliss eternal is to be found and burning hell away from you!" Peter Cornelius has supplied the song with arabesque roulades, in his opera, "The Barber of Bagdad" which the tonsorial master does *not* sing in the Arabian Nights' Tale; but in "The Tale of the Barber's Second Brother" the latter, Bakbak, is taken by an old woman to a large house where a girl "like the full moon," after he has been given food and wine, calls for "ten moon-like slaves, each with a lute in her hand, who commenced to sing with a loud voice, delighting my brother." The Barber's sixth brother is the guest in a house where, "when all had eaten their fill they went into the drinking hall and there were girls like the moon, who sang all sorts of melodies and played all sorts of instruments, and there they drank until they were drunken." In "The Tale of Ali Ibn Bekkar and Shems Annahar" we have a charming musical picture of Haroun-al-Raschid's palace garden: "Many birds alighted in the garden; they beat their wings and conversed together with twitterings that sounded in all conceivable keys. On either side of a pool stood seats of ebony-wood inlaid with silver, and in each seat was a maiden, more radiant than the sun, in a costly gown, with a lute or other instrument before her. And the song of the maidens merged with that of the birds and the murmuring of the wind with the plashing of the waters." When Shems Annahar, the Caliph's lovely slave, is carried in to meet Ali, the hero of this love adventure, the maidens rise, tune their instruments and sing the following verses in chorus: "Allah is great! Now the full moon has risen and the beloved is united to the lover who loves her so tenderly. Who has ever before seen the sun and the radiant full moon together in the Garden of Eternity or in the world below?" a sentiment which surely, under the circumstances, would lead pious *imams* to shake their heads. And this story of a hopeless love which ends in death, flows uninterruptedly to the sound of song and lute, its musical climax the stolen moment of bliss when Shems Annahar "sang with such art and with such a heavenly voice that Ali was like a bird deprived of its wings, so

harmonious in its unity was her singing and playing." Happier is "The Tale of Nureddin and Anis Adjelis, the Beautiful Persian." The Persian girl's voice is as beautiful as her person and it sings throughout the story the passionate love-melodies of the East. Poetic is the scene where she and Nureddin, who have flown from Basrah to Bagdad, stray by chance into the Caliph Haroun's gardens on the Tigris and are entertained by the wine-bibbing old Sheikh Ibrahim, their steward. Enis Adjelis herself has best described her own singing: "She seizes the lute, her fingers glide through its strings and every tone carries the soul along with it! She sings, and her voice heals the deaf, and even the dumb call out to her and cry 'You have done well!'" It is the lovely Persian's musical voice which moves Haroun's heart and procures the happiness of her lover and herself. In "The Tale of the Bagdadee and His Slave" the latter, who loves her master, is sold by him to a Hashimite of Basrah because he had lost his all. Long she resists her new owner's plea to sing for him, but at last takes up her lute with tears and sings in melting accents, "Dark was the night when the caravan departed with my lover; setting forth without mercy with my heart's beloved, and since its camels have started fiery coals glow in my heart!" It turns out that the Bagdadee, unable to reconcile himself to losing the girl, is concealed aboard the ship carrying her to Basrah, and her singing so moves the Hashimite's heart that he frees her and lets her wed the man she loves.

Throughout the magic pages of "The Thousand Nights and One Night," stories of oriental passion and fantasy, aglow with gold, jewels and silks of many hues, throb with the music of harp, lute and zither, of voices of more than ordinary charm, and its songs echo the most fiery poetry of passion in which love ever has been sung. The glories of the Saracen civilization of Persia, Egypt and India have departed, but the oriental love-song, despite Mahomet and the Mahometan Fundamentalists who tried to lay music under the ban of religious censure, still flourishes in the lands of Asia Minor, among the black tents of the desert Arabs of Syria and Palestine, in Turkish *vilayets* and the Indian native Mahometan States, in Tunisia and Algiers, among Berbers and Riffians, and the wild Chinese Mahometan communities descended from bands of early Arab invaders, so completely assimilated by the Middle Kingdom that only their religion differentiates them from the Mongolians amid whom they live. For love and music, the voice of love, antedate conscious religion and, should civilization eventually relapse into barbarism, probably would survive it, since it is a primal instinct of body and mind, while religion—if



we are to accept as evidence the status of primitive tribes still extant—becomes an essential, a need only upon taking thought, whereas an instinct need not be activated thereby.

### MUSIC IN MOORISH SPAIN

The same radical departure from the stricter religious rule of Mahomet with regard to music was noticeable in Moorish Spain. Music and poetry were the twin souls of Saracen Andalusia, as the Arabs called that part of Gothic Spain they conquered. Their reign began and ended with music. Abdulasis, son of the conquerer Musa, whom the Caliph Suleiman made Emir of Andalusia, was a lover of music. In the gardens of the Alcazar of Seville, lovely Egilona, widow of Don Roderick the Goth, won Abdulasis' heart. The daughter of a Mahometan King of Algiers on her way to wed a young Tunisian prince when her galley was driven ashore on the coast of Spain, she was brought to Toledo, where King Roderick held his court. After she became Abdulasis' wife, she rode through the streets of Seville on a white palfrey whose harness was hung with tinkling golden bells while the people flung themselves down before her, and her infatuated lover blasphemously had the *muezzins* add an extra cantillation to the call to prayer they cried from the minarets, invoking Allah's blessing upon her. But women are seldom satisfied, and when Abdulasis' enemies brought the Caliph word that he allowed Egilona to wear a crown within the harem walls, black Nubians rode hastily from Damascus and one evening as Abdulasis sang to the lovely African while strumming his lute in the Alcazar gardens, their heads were laid at their feet.

The original Arab definition of the "perfect man" made him a poet, hero, and liberal giver, who could read, swim and bend the bow. To these the Moors added still another requisite, a knowledge and love of music. The gorgeous court of the Bagdadee caliphs, with its Persian dancers, singers and instrumentalists, was equalled and even exceeded by that of the Andalusian caliphs who assumed the title of Commander of the Faithful. Music which, generally speaking, had perished as a science in Mahometan lands, was then scientifically studied in Moorish Spain, the principles of harmony and musical composition analyzed and established. And, prompted by the harmonious Arab tongue itself, music mirrored the emotions of high and low in cadenced recitatives and melodies which still survive in the *malagueñas*, the *sandangos*, *canas*, *peteneras*, *cachuchas* and other wild or melan-

choly floriate and embellished oriental dance-songs of present-day Southern Spain. Don Quixote broke up Maese Pedro's puppet-show when the narrator, recounting an ancient legend of chivalry, spoke of the bells of the Cordovan mosques ringing the alarm when Gayferos escapes with his rescued wife Melisandra. "Mosques have no bells!" cried the doughty knight. He was quite right; and yet, such was the liberality of the greatest of the Spanish caliphs, that while the *muezzins* called the folk to prayer from four thousand Cordovan minarets, he also allowed the chiming of their own church bells to summon the Christians to their devotions in that Mahometan city; and priests, monks and nuns were allowed to walk its streets in the robes of their order unmolested. This Islamic investiture of cantillation and Christian church-bell with equal rights of religious sound is one which certain Christian legislators may ponder with profit.

The Caliph Abderrahman II was ruled by an Arabian Farinelli named Ziryab (a baritone, however, not a male soprano), who had so charmed the Caliph Haroun-al-Raschid that he believed he heard the *djinni* singing him to sleep when Ziryab sang. Ziryab, in fact, was the Petronius of a gentler Moslem Nero. Not content with knowing a repertoire of 10,000 songs by heart, he was an authority on the preparation of asparagus and other savory dishes, induced the long-locked Moslems, who parted their hair in the middle, to adopt a boyish bob long before the latter was thought of in Western lands (ninth century A. D.), set the fashion of eating from crystal instead of silver vessels, and became the social dictator of Moorish life. Abderrahman III made Cordova the musical rival of Bagdad. Under his auspices Al-Farabi prepared his work on Arab music, and while Christian kings and princes in the rest of Europe could not sign their own names to state documents, the street boys of Cordova could read and write owing to an excellent public school system the Caliph had introduced. Abderrahaman, music-lover and artist, had none of the harem troubles which so annoyed the Prophet himself. It is true he spent a quarter of a century building a magnificent palace-town with gardens of glorious beauty for his favorite slave, the lovely Zahra, after whom he named it. But Abderrahaman sought safety in numbers, for Zahra was only one among six thousand other harem flowers. Yet Moslem chroniclers tell us that in spite of so many family ties the Caliph in his old age "was inclined to melancholy."

With the pleasure-gardens of Zarah are associated the names of other Moorish caliphs and sultans. King Alkhamen, alas, was

not a hundred per cent. musician. Though fond of music he was better known as a book-lover; not, however, in a sense the modern public librarian could commend. For history declares that the book King Alkahmen best loved to read was one Allah's own hand had bound in a satiny brown skin. By the love-light in the eyes of this volume of Allah's providing, the romantic book-worm turned its pages of passion as it—or rather she, for her name was Rediya, a Bagdadee singing-girl—sang him love's old sweet song.

In Zahra, whose fairy palaces and kiosks were destroyed by the grandson of Abderrahman III, and in the Alhambra, which still remains to testify to the by-gone glories of Moorish rule, we find an architectural feature essentially musical and Mohametan. No music was sweeter to the desert Arab's ear than the music of running water, and this preference he carried with him to Spain. There and in India, in particular, we find water supplying the palace of caliph and emperor with a *musical soul*. In the vanished palace of Zahrah and in the Alhambra, as in the Indian palaces of Delhi, Agra and ruined Fatihpur-Sikri, veins of living water are as much a part of the architectural plan as are horseshoe arches and arabesque columns. Everywhere, through airy stone chambers, crystal waters softly rill, and fountain-jets rise and fall with silver sound, and the waters sing their song in marble channels through which they run brook-like along the floors, or basins in which they scatter in tinkling spray. The greatest of occidental composers from Bach to Debussy have felt the compelling charm of water-music and tried to express it. The direct employ of this liquid nature-music as building material, however, probably is the most unique of its kind.

Boabdil el Chico, last Moorish king of Granada, last Moorish kingdom left of the Arab conquest, was a musician, a singer of tender *romanzas*, a poetic and knightly lover. The Moorish conquest of Spain ended as it began, with the love-songs which Mahomet had enjoined. The *Romancero Moresco* paints a picture of King Boabdil before the fatal day when, Granada fallen, he rode into African exile with a song of lamentation on his lips. "With his bold Abencerrages, the 'Little King' of Granada one morning was enjoying the fresh breeze in the Generalife, watching the waters flow, and listening to the song of the nightingales. About him Moors and Moresco girls plucked the guitar and danced the *zambra* and lovers crowned their mistresses with flower-wreaths." On this scene of peace intrudes a messenger. The town of Antequera has fallen into Christian hands and Boabdil's

favorite Vindaraja has been captured. And the King, inconsolable, not because of the loss of the city, but for that of his love, sings: "Vindaraja of my life, Vindaraja of my soul, by the governor of the Alhambra I have sent you letters filled with words of love springing from my bowels, speaking my heart, wounded by a golden arrow. Of what use are my riches now that my soul is captive!" And he bids a faithful vassal hasten to Antequera to ransom Vindaraja. "Take with you a hundred *dobles* of gold and as many of silver, a hundred horses with silver-broidered caparaçons. Bring her back like a queen, for she is queen of my heart. In the districts through which she passes you shall have bulls course and command jousts with reeds be given, there shall be fêtes and tourneys, trumpets shall sound and *nakirs* beat!" And in the *Guerras Civiles de Granada*, by Gines Perez de Hyta, we read romantic accounts of the court of King Boabdil; how "the king with his gentles and the queen with her dames feasted with great content to the sound of plentiful and diversified music, not alone of minstrels but of dulcimers, harps and lutes such as were played in the royal hall," before he passed forever from that hall.

#### CONCLUSION

Mahomet's attempt to make all the earth keep musical silence while he sang in heaven was doomed to failure from the beginning. And though in the more scientific sense Saracen music perished with Saracen civilization, it has survived throughout the Mahometan lands in its folk-wise form. Inflected with the race accents of its local native soil it has been raised up to new life, transmuted by the musicians of the West. In songs and instrumental compositions, symphonic works and operas, the rich, exotic colors, the polyphonic rhythms, the heart-notes and tonal broideries, the soul of Eastern music has been framed in the setting of occidental forms. The musical orientalist of the West, from Félicien David and his symphonic ode "The Desert" to Santoliquido—to mention an ultra-modern composer who has drawn inspiration in particular from Tunisian folk-music, because where music was concerned Mahomet's followers refused to take him seriously—have added to the sum total of beautiful music works as golden and jeweled, as iridescent in perfume and color as the Arabian Nights' Tales themselves. "Singing is one of the scouts of depravity," said that staunch Mahometan Fundamentalist Ali Fudayl. But it is to the oriental "boy (and girl)

scouts" of singing, who sang in the Prophet's very beard, so to say, and handed on their songs from his day to our own, that we owe the many beautiful works developed from their themes, themes which in the main express those primal urges religious injunctions could not stifle.

## SOME EVIDENCE FOR THE NATURALNESS OF THE LESS USUAL RHYTHMS

By JOHN ROSS FRAMPTON

THE notation employed by the musicians of the early church made no attempt at definite determination of either pitch or rhythm. No one can ever know just how any melody was rendered. And it is probable that no two localities gave just the same interpretation. Modern notation is an attempt to remedy this defect. Of necessity the change from the indefinite to the definite occasioned a more or less rigid classification of rhythms. Those rhythms in which the accent recurred periodically were considered the best. It mattered not whether this accent came every two beats or only every three beats. Nor did it matter whether there were only one such accent between bar lines (2-4 or 3-4), or whether there were two or three or even four (as in 4-8, 9-8 or 12-8). The essential point was the regularly recurring periodicity of these accents. Alternations of duple and triple rhythms were considered artificial.

The simplest alternation of these rhythms gives quintuple rhythm. More complicated forms are the septuple and the nonuple. Some composers have used the less usual rhythms very effectively, sometimes to avoid any feeling of dance rhythm, and to obtain the effect of sublime exaltation (Dvořák's *On the Holy Mount*, written in 5-4), and sometimes to secure a rollicking dance rhythm (Tschaikowsky's *Symphonie Pathétique*). These and others are acknowledged to be beautiful and successful, but are called exceptional. Generally, also, the program will mention the rhythm, thus emphasizing the fact that it is not in conformity with the customary rhythms.

But are these less used rhythms violations of a law of the human mind and of art, or merely of the laws of scholasticism? Can not evidence be adduced to show that these "exceptions" are as natural as are the common rhythms, although they are not the offspring of lesser minds, as yet? The academic training often clips the wings of even the stronger intellects and prevents their soaring to heights they might otherwise have achieved. This is



as true of harmonic effects as of rhythm. A few modern writers have shown that there is great beauty in material which directly violates the older laws of harmony. Violates? No, rather transcends. But it required effort: effort expended in part to grow away from their early training, and yet to avoid artificiality and secure naturalness. Later composers will be spared this effort, for they will have become mentally comfortable in the idiom of these new harmonies.

For years theorists have known that the music of the Indians offered instances of the natural use of the less usual rhythms. But their contention has been that they were not concerned with aboriginal music, and savage rhythms, but only with the cultured and refined art of their compeers. They admit that this is interesting psychologically, as evidence that the mind which has never been trammelled by the laws of form in musical composition (as they say, which has not been educated!) can express itself in these rhythms. But what of the mind of the artist? Does it ever express itself subconsciously in these rhythms?

Some interesting data have been preserved in phonograph records. Master pianists have recorded their interpretations of many works. The fact that these records might be subjected to very rigid analysis did not concern them. They wished merely to leave to future generations as nearly perfect a presentation of their ideals in art as the present-day recording machines permit. For this reason any evidence bearing on the present question is of unquestionable value. (It should be remarked, also, that the data on which this article is based are not the result of an extended search through the vast library of master records, but is a chance result of a study of the few records mentioned, and for an entirely different purpose. There might be no further evidence in the whole international collection of records, or the very next record might produce further confirmation. Surely no one would have anticipated that the Grieg and Chopin numbers would prove pertinent.)

Three compositions furnish our material. The first is the Second Hungarian Rhapsody of Liszt. The composer wrote the introductory measures in two-four rhythm, but with free use of "grace-notes." He also added the words "a capriccio." It would certainly be most interesting and helpful if we had a record of his own performance. But we have only the recordings of the last fifteen years, and from them we secure valuable data.

The measures in question recur twice on later pages, and these measures also furnish evidence. It would hardly be expected

that all the performers would render these twenty-four measures alike, or that all would deviate from the 2-4 time demanded by the composer. So we find that Messrs. Josef Hofmann and Rachmaninoff remained strictly by the prescribed signature, with the accompanying chord sounding in the center of the measure, and the grace-notes played fast, too fast to permit even a suspicion of a division of the measure into quadruple rhythm (Fig. 1).



Fig. 1.—HOFMANN.

Mr. Backhaus played the grace-notes slower permitting the rhythm to become positively quadruple, still with the accompanying chord in the center of the measure (Fig. 2).



Fig. 2.—BACKHAUS.

Mr. Cortot also interpreted the phrase (but when it appears in Measure 62), in quadruple rhythm, but with the chord on count "two" instead of "three" (Fig. 3). Mr. Backhaus permitted this only in Measure 68.



Fig. 3.—CORTOT, Measure 62.

There has been no noteworthy capriciousness in these performances. But Mr. Cortot played the same theme, when found

in Measure 110, and still written in the same 2-4 rhythm, in 3-4 time (Fig. 4). This is interesting as hinting at the possibility

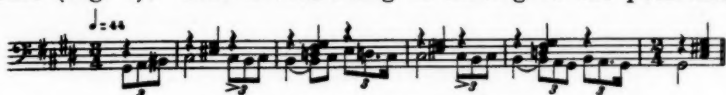


Fig. 4.—CORTOT, Measure 109.

of still greater irregularity. And so it is not surprising to find that Mr. Grainger played all three passages in 5-4 rhythm by alternating measures of 2-4 and 3-4 (Fig. 5). In the introduction



Fig. 5.—GRAINGER, Measure 1.

the first 5-4 measure is rather *rubato*, but the next is almost with the metronome. He stayed with the metronome also at Measure 110 *seq.* Mr. Paderewski played Measures 110 *seq.* in the same rhythm, and almost metronomic (Fig. 6).



Fig. 6.—PADEREWSKI, Measure 110.

The caprice of these men led them into the realm of so-called artificial rhythms. But the final instances are much more startling. There is a record of the Columbia orchestra which shows the introductory measures played in 4-4 time (as the Cortot illustration, Fig. 3), then measures five and six combined into one measure of 7-4 rhythm. Mr. Cortot played these introductory measures in the same way. And Mr. Paderewski played the entire introduction in seven-four, as shown in Fig. 7.



Fig. 7.—PADEREWSKI, Measure 1.

Most remarkable is the rhythm which Mr. Paderewski used in Measures 62 *seq.* The illustration (Fig. 8) shows that his 9-4 is not at all a three-times-three, as is the ordinary nine-beat rhythm. It is rather an extension of the 5-4 or the 7-4 into a still larger pattern—a broader interpretation, a freer "*capriccio*,"



Fig. 8.—PADEREWSKI, Measure 62.

It is four-plus-five, changing later to three-plus-four (7-4), and ending 3-4.

The Chopin Ballade in A♭ furnishes an unexpected instance of pianists rendering a simple rhythm as quintuple. At Measure 28 there are five measures each containing a trill followed by four sixteenths in both hands in contrary motion, written in six-eight time. The records of Mr. Godowsky and Mme. Olga Samaroff definitely play these measures in five-eight rhythm, altering the four sixteenths to thirty-second notes. This gives a much more intense rhythm than that written by Chopin, and it would almost seem as though Chopin himself might have so performed this, even though he wrote it in the rhythm prescribed by the academic theorists of his day, who were already sufficiently horrified at his innovations, any way.

Finally, we adduce a striking instance of the artistic performer rising superior to the form-obeying composer, with the same person in both rôles. Grieg wrote his "To Spring" in strict accordance with the older traditions of composition: that is; having determined upon a rhythm he maintained it throughout, six quarter-notes to the measure—a simple two-times-three rhythm. He did wander into three-times-two in the measures just before the climax near the center of the composition, but without change of signature. Probably no artistic pianist would play the quarter-note chords of the climax with metronomic regularity. There is extant a phonograph record of this piece, made by Mr. Grieg, himself, in 1903. (London Gramophone.) And at this climax he played the eight measures of duple rhythm as if there were

three measures of quintuple and two of triple (Fig. 9). There is no possible question as to the rhythm of this record.

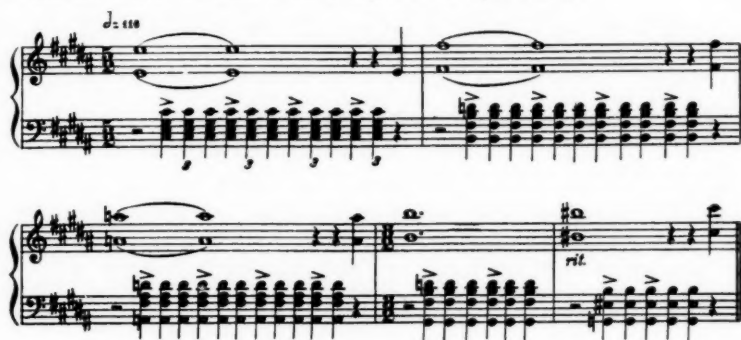


Fig. 9.—GRIEG.

Excepting for the instances of duple and quadruple rhythm cited for the Rhapsody, it is highly improbable that these artists consciously employed these rhythms. On the other hand, there can be no doubt but that they interpreted these measures strictly in accordance with the dictates of their artistic selves. They determined what interpretation sounded best to their artistic judgment and played accordingly. They were no more concerned with a 4-4, or a 4-8, or a 5-4, a 7-4 or even a 9-4 than they would have been at retarding or accelerating some measures: not as much, in fact, for they would have realized what they were doing in this latter case, and they probably did not in the cases cited. Nor is it our province to question their right to make such alterations. And even if we did so with the Liszt and the Chopin, we surely could not cavil at Mr. Grieg's performance of his own composition. The pertinent point is that we here find the "artificial" rhythms used subconsciously, and entirely in obedience to the dictates of the artistic minds of our greatest pianists. And moreover, they do not in the least sound strained or unnatural, any more than the "exceptional" instances of quintuple rhythm in the *Symphonie Pathétique*, or than the "uncultured and inartistic" music of the savages. How many individuals among the hundreds of thousands who have heard Mr. Paderewski play this Rhapsody have suspected that he was using "artificial" quintuple, septuple and even nonuple rhythms! And Mr. Paderewski himself would probably be surprised and dubious, or even amused, were he told of it. But the counting of his record in these places is not more *rubato* than his tempos everywhere, and is very convincing.

## TWO CENTURIES OF A FRENCH MUSICAL FAMILY—THE COUPERINS

By JULIEN TIERSOT

THERE is a French family which, during two full centuries, exercised a sort of suzerainty over the music of its country, at least in the domain of religious and instrumental music—the Couperins. Their line has been compared, and not without reason, to that of the Bachs. We have no intention of exaggerating the relevancy of this comparison, neither do we dream of placing the genius of him who was called *le grand Couperin* on a level with that of the great Johann Sebastian. Still, with due observance of proportion, there may be found in the career of either family certain equivalents in that of the other, and each of these musical lines, in its own country, did honor to art. Faithful to their homeland, never leaving their birthplace except to establish themselves in the neighboring capital, from which they were not to depart, or even succeeding each other without a break, until death claimed the last, on the same bench before the same organ, cultivating pure music exclusively without once yielding to the oftentimes fallacious seductions of the theatre, the Couperins displayed a continuous and homogeneous activity, maintaining the fine traditions of an austere and lofty art throughout the span of their existence.

They formed a veritable dynasty of artists. The actuality of their suzerainty is confirmed by the very terms used to distinguish their names; one of the Couperins was François I, another François II, and the most highly gifted of them all earned the honorable appellation of "the Great"—like Louis XIV. During these two centuries, so glorious in the annals of the French intellect, they found expression for its musical essence in whatsoever is most permanent and most substantial.

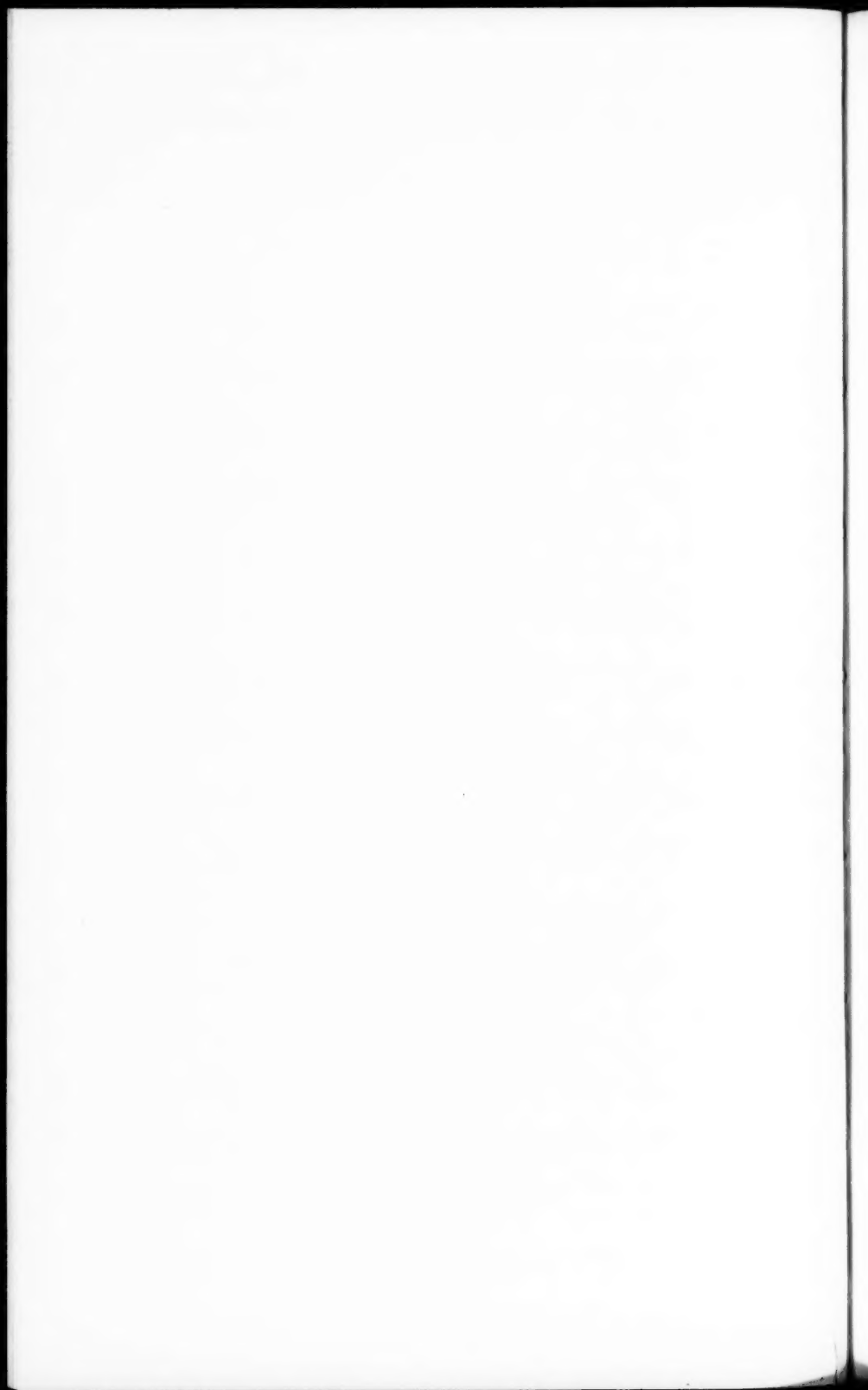
In point of such continuity, their case is unique. It therefore deserves to be studied in its entirety and explored throughout its development.

In origin and essence the Couperins are eminently French. The earliest known of the name were born and dwelt only a few leagues from Paris, and, for the day when the first came to the capital, none of them ever left it until the extinction of the family.





*François Couperin Compositeur Organiste  
de la Chapelle du Roy.  
Né en 1688 Mort en 1733*



The cradle of the line, Chaumes, is a small, ancient town of La Brie, a rich and fertile region that from times immemorial has formed part of the Île-de-France. At the beginning of the seventeenth century a Couperin was settled there as a merchant. He became the father of a numerous family. He himself engaged in music, so far as a countryman could do so, in his leisure moments, and it is said that he played the organ in the parish church. Doubtless it was he who set a salutary example for his three sons, whereby they profited directly; and generation after generation, famed in the history of French art, were the issue.

This countryside of the Île-de-France, where the good folk lived a life to which the pleasures of games and singing and dancing were not unknown, also harbored many a château wherein the arts were held in high esteem. In some cases their possessors enjoyed the advantage of being artists themselves. Not far from Chaumes lay a demesne, La Chambonnière, whose owner was a virtuoso rightly renowned at the courts of both Louis XIII and Louis XIV. He too was descended from an artist-family, the Champions, musicians in the Church and the Court of France since the sixteenth century. His father had married a noble demoiselle; and he, having made a fortune, desired to add to his patronymic a title derived from his mother; thus he assumed the rank of Baron de Chambonnières. His true title to nobility was that conferred upon him by the rôle he played in the history of art: a highly talented virtuoso on the harpsichord and spinet, he was the first in France to compose for his instrument; his first book of pieces for clavecin marks, in this respect, an important date. He divided his time between the exercise of his art in Paris and the bounteous, easy-going life of the fields. His example was well calculated to attract the attention of young people whose taste for music was already pronounced.

One summer day—the festival of Saint-Jacques, therefore July the 24th—the friends of the master-clavecinist had gathered in his house to celebrate his birthday. There was animated converse around a well-spread board, and many a glass was emptied. It was, apparently, during the Fronde, just midway of the seventeenth century. "I know of nothing better, on Sundays and holidays, than talk of wars and battles, while far in the distance the peoples are breaking each other's heads." Something similar the guests of the baron may have been saying, while doing justice to the gifts of the Author of nature! All at once there resounded above the joyous babble the harmony of instruments posted outside. Everybody listens, and, in the congenial warmth of the

festivity, all declare themselves enchanted. Now, who could have had the happy thought to salute the master of the house with this delicate minstrelsy? The door opens and, from the height of the stairway, Chambonnières saw, lined up before his mansion, a group of young men scraping away for dear life on their violins. This (mind you!) was in the *grand siècle*, the golden age of courteous manners; salutations were exchanged, thanks and compliments thrown in; the master invited the serenaders to enter and take seats at the table. Whom have I to thank, so he asked, for this fine concert? One of the musicians, who appeared to be the spokesman of the group, responded to the approving wonderment of his host by presenting himself. He said that they were three brothers; that they had come from Chaumes; that they were not only able to play the violin, but the organ, too. He was the eldest, his Christian name, Louis; next to him came François, and the young boy over yonder was Charles. Their family-name—Couperin.

Renewed compliments, coupled with protestations of a friendship pledged *inter pocula*: Chambonnières told his interlocutor that such a man as he was not made for provincial life, and that he must accompany him to Paris. To hear this proposal was precisely the object Louis Couperin had in mind when organizing this expedition. He enthusiastically accepted the offer of Chambonnières' protection, and when the latter returned to Paris he rejoined him there; his two brothers, François and Charles, soon followed.

This day dates the entry of the Couperin family into history. Thenceforward we shall see the successive members playing a part, always honorable, sometimes glorious, in French musical life from the beginning of the reign of Louis XIV until the downfall of the royal house.

\*   \*  
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First of all came the three brothers, whom we find speedily installed in Paris. It was their preference to hold together as a family group, and their renown was augmented through this association. La Fontaine, in an enumeration of the "illustrious" clavecinists of his time, writes of "les Couperin," citing their collective title after the name of their master, Chambonnières.

They none the less retained their distinctive personalities.

That of Louis, the eldest, is the most remarkable. Like Mozart, he died at the age of thirty-six, bequeathing to posterity an

important collection of works that form a most significant milestone in the progress of instrumental music in France. More about these anon. He played the violin in the ballet of the king, who had admitted him as a player on the viol. Finally—an important point in their collective biography—he was appointed organist at the church of Saint-Gervais, a post in which his brother Charles succeeded him, to be followed in turn by François Couperin le Grand; after him, a succession of cousins, nephews, and nephews-in-law; so that, from the time of King Louis, towards the middle of the seventeenth century, down to 1826, the death-year of the last descendant, the organ of Saint-Germain was not played by any hands but those of the Couperins. This fact is the more noteworthy because that church has played a peculiarly significant rôle in the history of sacred music; it was there, at the end of the nineteenth century, that the renaissance of Palestrina's art was brought about—an art through which, in great measure, the musical mentality of our contemporary epoch found its revivification.

Neither François nor Charles left an equally valuable legacy as composers. The former was known more especially as a music-teacher, the latter as an organist. Their chief desert lay in being the progenitors of their dynasty; François was the head of the line that continued into the nineteenth century; as for Charles, he had the glory of becoming the father of Couperin le Grand.

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He was the man of destiny. Without him the Couperins would undoubtedly have left the memory of a family "estimable for its talents and its sense of honor," as one of its early historiographers opined. But, in addition to the conscientious efforts of them all to do their work well, they possessed something that was their very own—genius.

The life of Couperin the Great was peaceful and retired, with naught of the magnificence of the great conquerors, or even of those brilliant artists whose careers were a series of dazzling triumphs. Nevertheless, his superiority was uniformly recognized. He received the appellation "Great" in his own century. His renown was the better deserved because it was won without the petty devices that compel success. He practised all the musical forms known at his period, excepting only one—the opera. Having voluntarily forgone success obtainable on the stage, he thus renounced what might have shed greatest lustre upon him; but to

him such lustre probably seemed factitious. May he receive the recompense for this somewhat haughty reserve to-day, when, by a fortunate turn of events, Pure Music has resumed its high rank in the hierarchy of art, and the name of Couperin has become almost synonymous with it.

François Couperin, second of the name, was born Nov. 10, 1668, in one of the annexes of the church of Saint-Germain, where his brother, as we know, was organist. This brother having died when barely eleven years old, François was left in undisturbed possession of the lodgings by the church-administration, that appears already to have considered the function of organist at Saint-Germain hereditary in the Couperin family. And in fact, young as he was, he had assumed its duties in succession to his father. Unusually precocious, he passed his youth in composing organ-music, motets, and some few short secular works. Besides this, he perfected his mastery of the clavecin. Although he did not publish his works for that instrument till much later, we may feel certain that several of his clavecin-pieces, and not the weakest ones, were written during this first period of his career. Furthermore, he was the first in France to compose sonatas for the violin, in imitation of those by Corelli, who was just beginning to be known in Europe; their classic style was essentially sympathetic to the spirit of our Latin musicians.

Very early he heard the call of high destiny. He was not more than twenty-five years old when, in 1693, he entered the king's service. The position of organist to the Chapelle Royale having fallen vacant, a competition was arranged in which several musicians took part. Louis XIV appeared in person to hear and judge; he chose François Couperin "*comme le plus expérimenté en cet exercice*" (as the most accomplished in this exercise). Thus he found himself admitted into the most brilliant circles, participating in the ceremonies of the court, composing motets for the king's masses—we are told, by Saint-Simon and other historians, that Louis XIV let no day go by without hearing mass in his chapel, some mass with music—accompanying the king on his trips from château to château, and frequently regaling him with music, secular as well as sacred. Later he was promoted to a position authorizing these latter services, that of "*joueur de clavecin de la musique de la Chambre du roi*" (harpsichordist of the king's chamber-music). One of his cousins, Louise Couperin, the daughter of his uncle François and an excellent singer formed in the classic school, was also admitted with him as a musician of the "*Chambre*." She sang his motets, and he accompanied



her in soirées when she sang opera-airs. He was likewise selected as music-teacher to the princes closest to the throne; on publishing his first book of *Pièces de Clavecin* in 1713 he could say: "For twenty years I have had the honor of serving the King and, during nearly the same period, of teaching Monseigneur le Dauphin, Duc de Bourgogne, and six princes or princesses of the royal House." He was made a chevalier of the Order of Latran; on his portrait, which presents him in a favorable light, the cross of the Order is displayed in front of him on a table which also bears several sheets of music with the notation of one of his clavecin-pieces. Finally, authorized by an edict which permitted commoners approved by their position or talent to obtain a patent of nobility, he had d'Hoyier design armorial bearings for him, on the escutcheon of which was displayed a golden lyre!

Before Couperin's entry into the king's service, Lully had been dead for some years. The king himself still had a long time to live: Couperin was—together with Lalande, whose fine motets are monuments truly worthy of the art of Louis XIV—the most representative musician of the latter portion of the reign. During this period the salons of Versailles became veritable art-centres; and he was the leading spirit in the musical reunions held therein. Until his last days he was his royal master's chosen companion in matters musical, and more than once he helped dissipate the ennui of the aged, melancholy monarch whom even Madame de Maintenon declared herself unable to amuse. For him Couperin composed *Concerts royaux* which, in 1714-15, the last years of the king's life, were played in concerts given every Sunday in the royal apartments by the instrumentalists of the "Chambre," in whose midst sat Couperin himself at the harpsichord. Here we find the point of departure for the symphonic concerts that were soon to be introduced to the general public, and that have occupied so large a place in modern music.

His rôle was no less important in the town than at court. He had won a numerous and brilliant following both as a music-teacher and as a composer. After the death of Louis XIV his visits to Versailles were no doubt less frequent; the Regent had other pleasures, and the new King was a mere child. But he was largely compensated by the liberty thus regained, whereby he profited with alacrity.

Opportunity was not wanting for the introduction and dissemination of his works among the enlightened and artistic classes of Paris; indeed, he did not need to leave his home in order to gain a hearing. Writing, in a preface, about one of his concerted

compositions, he says: "I perform it in my family and with my pupils." He had two sons, one of whom was organist in a convent, while the other played the clavecin "in a scholarly and admirable manner" (says a contemporary) and succeeded his father as court clavecinist. We have already mentioned one of the daughters of the first François Couperin, his cousins, a brilliant singer at court; another (like her eldest daughter) was an organist, and their brother Nicolas became the successor of his uncle at the organ of Saint-Gervais, where he had acted as his substitute for several years towards the close of his life. Still others came forward to join this family group. In like manner the great Bach, in the isolation of the German towns, satisfied his craving for activity by letting his numerous children spell out his music, with his wife Anna Magdalena, an expert vocalist, in their midst. The tranquil and honorable existence of François Couperin also finds a parallel in that of César Franck. Like him he lived in his family circle, passing composedly from his organ to lesson-giving; gracious to his pupils, though at the same time exacting from them the efforts necessary for making progress; spending the hours unoccupied by professional duties in working for his art; preferably frequenting such social circles as were disposed to listen to music, and soon becoming the moving spirit in them; surrounded by the esteem of all, and the admiration of the most discerning; having no ambition reaching beyond these realities, which seem to have procured him every satisfaction that he desired.

For many years he had no longer dwelt in the home of his birth, the annex to Saint-Germain, having taken up his abode in the then most brilliant section of Paris, the *quartier* of the Palais-Royal. Thence it was that he issued his books of music, for the publication of which he had waited for forty-five years, and which, multiplying rapidly after 1713, promptly spread his fame throughout musical Europe. There were very numerous pieces for clavecin; sonatas for violins with *basso continuo*; concertos for divers instruments, like those he wrote for Louis XIV toward the end of his career; works of a descriptive character, a species of symphonic poems, written in the traditional form of the sonata and concerto, but not averse to taking certain liberties; *The Apotheosis of Corelli*, and the same of *Lully*. Taken as a whole, his works form, properly speaking, a résumé of the activities of French music in that great classic century, and body forth its purest qualities.

He died the 14th of December, 1733, fully aware that his end was at hand. In the preface to his last book of *Pièces de Clavecin* he writes, in testamentary vein:

I thank the public for the applause it has so generously bestowed on my works. I trust that I have left something to make my loss regretted, if regrets may avail us in aught after this life; but one must at least cherish that idea if one would strive to deserve a chimerical immortality to which almost all men aspire.

This philosophical serenity, this resignation, are highly characteristic of the man, who always considered art and life from a serious point of view.

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Couperin le Grand was frankly proud of his family's past. Those who came after him had far greater reason to pride themselves on their name after he had borne it, for he, more than all the rest, had made it glorious. His successors maintained the tradition for a century, doing their best to follow the noble examples of their forebears. Their endeavor was not unaccompanied by misgivings; they did not possess the same genius, and felt it. Not one of them, for that matter, was a direct descendant of the second François, his sole issue being two daughters who remained unmarried, and a son who died as a child; those who continued the line were all descended from his uncle, the first François Couperin.

Nicolas, who took over the organ at Saint-Gervais, left no compositions that are known to us.

His son, Armand-Louis, played a more interesting part in music. Born in 1725, he exercised his art during the second half of the reign of Louis XV and nearly the whole reign of Louis XVI, being a contemporary of Haydn and the youngest sons of Bach, and dying two years before Mozart—a dual synchronism that places him at once in the history of his century and that of his art. Through him the Couperin family became allied with other artist-families of kindred aim who also held a place in French musical life at that time; he married the daughter of a celebrated clavecin-maker, Blanchet, who was himself related to another manufacturer whose fame still endures—Pascal Taskin. He was a brilliant and admired virtuoso; as such he had no lack of plaudits and marks of esteem; and still, despite his efforts to adapt himself to the current style, he could not wholly shake off the influence of the past. Burney, who heard him on one of his journeys, and praised him, nevertheless remarks: "His taste in music is not so modern as it might be." Atavism did not relinquish its rights. As a composing artist he shows himself modest, perhaps excessively so. He wrote much, but published little. He too refused to work for the theatre. A certain indecision inherent in his character

impelled him to follow the fluctuations of the successive epochs through which he passed. In youth he published a *cantatille* (short cantata), *l'Amour médecin*—a genre already obsolescent. Later came Variations on an air from *Richard cœur de lion*; this time he feels the attraction of *opéra comique*. Like all his ancestors, he wrote pieces for clavecin, just at the time of the decline of that instrument, so soon to be supplanted by the pianoforte. But in the same breath it should be stated that he, possibly the first in France, wrote sonatas in the new style; so that after François Couperin, who had earlier adopted the form of the primitive sonata brought in from Italy, Armand-Louis was also among the first to compose sonatas after the new manner inaugurated in Germany by the son of that other great master to whom we must always return—Philipp Emanuel Bach.

Armand-Louis died on Feb. 1, 1789, in a street-accident that caused great public excitement. His eldest son, Pierre-Louis, succeeded him in most of his positions, notably at Saint-Gervais; but he died that same year. The second son, François-Gervais, enjoyed a longer life; he passed away in 1829, and with him perished the last scion of the Couperin dynasty. But what experiences he had undergone! Note the date on which he was called to succeed his brother and his father, the portentous year of 1789. By a curious coincidence, he married on Sept. 22, 1792, the very day on which the Republic was proclaimed in France! All the positions that he held in the churches, the hereditary offices associated with the *ancien régime*, were lost to him. Notwithstanding, he adjusted himself as best he might to the new situation. He was, perhaps, one of those who had faith in the future of the new-born era. As a composer, he treated his subjects after the fashion of the day; he played the organ at revolutionary festivals; he penned musical pieces with such titles as *Les Incroyables*, *Les Merveilleuses*, and published variations on *Ça ira*. As art, all these were quite futile. But, all this time, he did not forget what he owed his name. In 1810, his aged mother still played the organ at a public function in Versailles; he could not refrain from announcing the fact in the press, recalling to mind all the organists "who had been her ancestors in the past two centuries." This fidelity to tradition, this pride in a glorious name, form one of the characteristic traits of the Couperins, and do them honor.

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Thus the Couperins participated in the vicissitudes of France during a long and important period of her history. We have seen

them in their first essays in art at a time when Louis XIII was still living, and followed the first steps of their career during the brilliant youth of Louis XIV. Now fitting preparation was made for welcoming him in whom was condensed the spiritual essence that was the product of their collective labors; musician to Louis le Grand, Couperin le Grand lived through and beyond the Regency. Thereafter arose still others, who carried on through the last decades of the French monarchy, the Revolution, the Empire, the Restorations: their name was not wholly extinct even in the middle of the nineteenth century. A long period, indeed, for the life of an artist-family to leave its impress on that of the nation!

Though all the Couperins were trained in accord with a tradition to which each did honor according to his ability, we have not failed to remark that not all were endowed with genius. For these last it suffices that we have revived the memory of their sojourn on earth; we shall not detail their several activities. But there were two whose rôle was important in the evolution of French music; we shall endeavor to summarize it perspicuously. These two are, on the one hand, the first in order of time; on the other, the first with respect to his undertakings and the beauty of his finished work. Let us consider both at closer range.

Louis Couperin occupies an entirely unique place in the history of French music. He presents himself in the guise of an initiator, a precursor, almost a primitive. Why should we not employ this term, even in speaking of the seventeenth century, an epoch, of a truth, the least primitive imaginable? Is it not applicable to any novel attempt, to any achievement realized without a model, without anterior tradition? In this aspect, Louis Couperin has every right to the appellation "primitive," for he was the first in point of time, or at least one of the very first, among the artificers of a musical form destined to attain no mean eminence in the future, particularly among his kindred—harpsichord-music. At his time this was a wholly new art. An offshoot of lute-playing, it did not begin to assert its independence until the opening of the seventeenth century.

This epoch marks one of the most significant developments known to the history of music; from it dates the incipience of nearly all the forms since developed by modern music. Tonality itself, about this time, underwent a genuine crisis which was to bring about a total reconstitution of harmony. This in turn gave birth to the *basso continuo*, which, substituted for the polyphony of the middle ages, formed—from a musical point of view—a veritable new language. Counterpoint was supplanted by accompanied



monody; this latter, although essentially vocal in origin, was not slow to exercise an influence on the instrumental style. Well-nigh everything in vogue at the time of Palestrina and Lassus was forgotten: the physiognomy of music was completely metamorphosed.

This revolution took place just when the Couperins entered the scene. Hence, the first compositions of Louis were conceived in a form unknown to the preceding century. The only musician who might have served him as a model, and whose works antedate his, was precisely the one under whom he studied, namely, Chambonnières: even his anteriority is problematical. True enough, Chambonnières was already a middle-aged man when, near the middle of the seventeenth century, he welcomed his young compatriots from the neighboring village to his château of La Brie: but in itself this does not constitute a considerable priority, and it is permissible to suppose that Chambonnières—whose desert as the spiritual ancestor of all the Couperins we do not dream of disputing—was, for Louis, a big brother rather than a father. In any event, we know on good authority that the works of Louis Couperin were written in 1656 and 1658, whereas the first book of *Pièces de clavecin* by Chambonnières bears the date of 1670. That this latter was formed of pages penned at an earlier date is possible, or even certain; it is no less certain that the output of the first two French clavecinists was parallel and contemporaneous.

The music of Chambonnières, contrasted with that of Louis XIV, seems more ancient, more archaic, withal. In substance it is an emanation from the last representatives of French Polyphony, the chapel-masters of the time of Henri VI, such as Claudin, Du Caurroy, Aux Cousteaux, whose works evince a dry and outworn scholasticism; the Instrumental music of Chambonnières, too, is not free from dryness.

Into forms closely approximating these, Louis Couperin poured an altogether different content. His style is more expressive. He is "galant," as people then used to say. This was the epoch of the *précieuses* and the hôtel de Rambouillet;<sup>1</sup> the art of Louis Couperin shows an affiliation with this spirit, yet without its ridiculous features. It is sincere and spontaneous. Ideas come to him unsought, and great is the freedom of his musical discourse. As an interpreter of the sentiments of the circle into which he was introduced, none other is his equal. A newcomer from his native village, he soon attuned himself to the tone of the

<sup>1</sup>The mansion of the Marquis de Rambouillet was a gathering-place for æsthetes of various stripe. (Transl.)



court. Not that he departed in aught from the good models he had elected to follow, but he added to them. To his natural elegance was united an inborn sense for the combinations of pure music.

As in the case of Chambonnières, and in the suites for lute of the preceding age, dances constituted the essential element in Louis Couperin's pieces for clavecin: Allemandes, less developed and less strict than those we admire in subsequent books, sometimes with a movement like very lively French chansons; Sarabandes, displaying the rather slender grace of the ancient *airs de cour*; Courants, Giges and Minuets, mostly very short; some few dances of a still earlier time—Voltes, Gaillards, and one Pavane; Chacones and Passecailles of greater development and a refinement of harmony that justify the appreciation of one of the rare contemporaries of the author who have made mention of him: "His style is replete with harmonies and enriched by beautiful dissonances in design [theme?] and imitation."

Scholastic culture is not alien to this French musician who owed nearly all his gifts to Nature. He occasionally writes in the strict style of the fugue, though unable, truth to tell, to refrain from interlarding his developments with melodic episodes that end by carrying him away, so that the fugue finishes after the fashion of a piece for the lute continually reinforced by designs of novel outline heedless of further imitation and carried out in the lower registers, accompanied by chords in the higher;—a triumph, in the final analysis, of the principle of the *basso continuo*.

In a word, this music of Louis Couperin possesses a quality essential to every work of art—it is alive. Still incomplete in formal design, it leads us to expect a rapid development. It is like the efflorescence of a new art. This was, in fact, to blossom forth and soon to attain perfection; the progress achieved was to be the work of a single generation, and that without going outside the family of its originator.

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With François Couperin le Grand we find ourselves face to face with an art at once definitive, multifold, and complex.

The creative career of this master divides into three periods. In the first, he works for the Church. In the second, for the King. In the third, for the public at large, but above all, we can truly say, for himself.

Let us follow him through each of these periods, without laying too much stress on the first two, which after all are blended

to a considerable extent, for Couperin composed chiefly sacred music both for the King and the Church. It is a fact that if his career had ceased at the death of Louis XIV, he would have been remembered as a composer of sacred music, and nothing more, because at that date he had hardly begun secular composition. He spent more than half his productive life in writing, either for the Chapelle Royale or for the parishes, organ-music and motets.

To his uncle, the first François Couperin, was for a long time attributed the composition of the "Messés pour Orgue," for the publication of which a concession was granted in the name of Couperin de Crouilly; but no use was ever made of it, and the work remained in manuscript. This is not the place to discuss this disputed question; we shall merely state that the most recent and careful researches show that this music was written by the second François Couperin at the age of twenty-two, and not by an aged musician who was slightly esteemed as a composer by his contemporaries, and who, in fact, produced nothing. The work is in the best organ-style, quite worthy of a youthful master who was later to achieve such notable progress in the style of instrumental music. These organ-pieces, written for the Catholic cult, deserved to have been included among those works "of some early French organists who were held to be great masters of harmony and fugue" which Bach (according to Forkel) had studied and taken as models. Such an appreciation suffices to give us an idea of their merits.<sup>1</sup>

The motets of Couperin le Grand are in a sensibly different style; none the less, they will again remind us of Bach. They are conceived in the same form and the same spirit as the immortal Cantatas (to which, let us remark, they are anterior by a good quarter-century). They are successions of airs or ensemble numbers, with obbligato instrumental accompaniment, and sometimes (rarely) intermingled with choruses. They do not in the least resemble the fine polyphonic and strictly vocal pieces of the Palestrina school, and depart even further therefrom with respect to religious sentiment; one must not expect such inspiration in French art-works of the eighteenth century. It is essentially music for soloists. Adapted, as they were, to a cult different from that to which the Leipzig cantatas were consecrated, the motets of Couperin are, just for that reason, lacking in what furnishes the former with their essential substance and their chief beauty—the Chorale. Apart from this difference, they approximate them

<sup>1</sup>The work in question has been published under the name of Couperin de Crouilly, in Vol. V of "Archives des Maîtres de l'Orgue," by Alexandre Guilmant.

as to style and movement. And, should our comparison of the "little French master" with the sublime Cantor be thought too ambitious, no one, assuredly, will find it out of the way if we mention other names of the eighteenth century whereof the vocal music of Couperin reminds us. In 1702 he wrote, for the appearance of his cousin Louise at court, the verset *Qui dat nivem*, a florid piece in which the light, high soprano voice dialogues with the flutes, throwing off vocalises à la nightingale whose use was soon to be revived and multiplied by Rameau; not at all religious, but very fine as art. Two years later the same Louise Couperin sang, at the close of the motet *Converte nos Deus*, a bold and brilliant bravura aria like those of which Händel afterwards wrote so many. François Couperin is not unworthy to assume a place in the company of such masters, whom he preceded.

But the true domain of François Couperin was that of instrumental music. He entered upon it at the beginning of his mature period, and did not leave it until the end of his life. Let us follow his course therein, without further digressions.

The *Pièces de Clavecin* represent the essential part of Couperin's work; they appeared in four books in 1713, 1716, 1722 and 1730. Taken as a whole, they are divided into twenty-seven "Ordres," more usually called Suites or Partitas. These Ordres, or Suites, are arranged by keys; all the numbers in one Ordre (Suite) are written in the same key, if not in the same mode (for the passage from major to minor having the same tonic is permissible and frequent). It was not till later that the Sonata and Symphony admitted, in their interior construction, the succession of relative keys.

At the inception of the instrumental style, the Suites were composed of dance-movements. When Couperin le Grand appeared on the scene, their relative order had been codified in some degree, as it is regularly to be found in the Suites of Sebastian Bach. First came a slow movement in majestic style, treated musically in the strict manner; this was sometimes a Pavane, in the earlier usage, but at Couperin's time it was the Allemande—which must not be confounded with the lightsome three-beat dance that later came into vogue under the same name, the most characteristic variety of which is the Waltz. Bach did not hesitate to lend greater significance to this introduction by employing, occasionally, the more ample form of the French Overture. This grave commencement was followed by the Courante, likewise a *danse noble* in a ternary movement whose freedom is such that  $\frac{3}{2}$  and  $\frac{4}{4}$  time are so subtly intermingled that one is not always sure

which beat should be observed. After this came the Sarabande, also in triple time, freer, slow, very singing and expressive. Then the Gigue, in a strongly marked ternary rhythm. Finally, in a more capricious order, lively, gay dances in which binary measure comes into its own; Branles, Bourrées, Gavottes, finishing (again in triple time) with a Chacone or Passecaille, or, more modernly, and enjoying the prestige of worldwide social success, the Minuet.

In his first Suites for clavier Couperin retains this form, though not without novel additions from the outset. And although he developed his individuality as a French musician of the eighteenth century by more recent accessions, one should have a care not to slight those of his works in which he followed the earlier traditions, for it was thus that he so firmly established his mastership, and discovered himself as a technician of the first rank, an equal to the most learned.

The name of Bach often occurs in this study, and it redounds to Couperin's honor that he can so insistently evoke the memory of such a master. Not that he resembles him; better far, he preserves his personality alongside of him, while pursuing an art analogous to his. Couperin's musical speech is not that of Bach; it is native to France, and that of the master of Eisenach has other roots. But either speech is beautiful, and each composer employs the one adapted to his genius and his race. The more rich and compact, the more impressively set forth, is the craft of Bach. But that of Couperin, less weighty, is finer, and no less apt for the realization of perfect conceptions. Surely, the science of the author of the Passions is prodigious; he is an expert in the multiplication of parts to infinity; by means of this massing of material he constructs movements of stupendous logic, indestructible both in appearance and reality. In this aspect, Couperin is manifestly not his equal. But the ingenious wefts that he forms with his native resources possess a buoyancy that in no way detracts from the solidity of his constructions; these are quite as durable, and at the same time present, according to their kind, an equal realization of the conceptions of the beautiful.

These are, in fact, two essentially different arts. Bach has at command a richer polyphonic mechanism. With him, all the participants in the sonorous structure are so blended and balanced that no single one seeks to predominate. Couperin works on another principle—that of the *basso continuo*. He composes music in two parts that are linked together by an interior web of tone; but, while possessing incomparable skill in creating an illusion of

complete polyphony by means of a dialogue between melody and bass, he can when he will build up his themes into an architectural structure wherein nothing is lacking. His harmonic "web of tone" then becomes a veritable polyphony. The Allemandes in his suites for clavecin are show-pieces written in excellent counterpoint; sometimes the parts are so many and so intricate that the player's two hands cannot cope with them, in which case Couperin is obliged to divide the task between two instruments and two executants, as in the Allemande in Book II "à 2 clavecins," whose complexity is such that we are justified in comparing this piece with any of Bach's mightiest work. Elsewhere he advises performance by at least three hands, even if the tone of the ancient spinet has to help out that of the clavecin. And so, judged as a scholarly musician, Couperin can show his proofs; he exhibits them, in general, with discretion, concealing his learning, which is none the less profound.

He displays his true quality most naturally when utilizing the ancient patterns.

But just here we note the appearance of another more familiar pattern of which he will make frequent and singularly happy use:—the Rondeau, an eminently French musical form derived from the Chanson, characterized by a periodically repeated theme, whose repetitions are separated by couplets. The melodic vein of these Rondeaux, in Couperin's works, is inexhaustible. The themes are sometimes swift and clear-cut, sometimes intimately expressive. Some of them have a precision of design that entails a remarkable plasticity in the development, an irresistible resiliency, a dynamism brought out in strong relief. Still other themes suggest poetic conceptions and visions.

Finally—and this is one of the subjects of broad interest presented by the works of Couperin—the music of these pieces has certain correspondences with extra-musical conceptions, as explained and indicated by the titles which were given them. Couperin himself explains them quite frankly and clearly in the preface to his *Pièces de Clavecin*:

I have always had in view different incidents that guided me in their composition: hence, the titles correspond to ideas that I had. I may be excused from rendering an account of them. Nevertheless, as there are among these titles some that appear to flatter me, it is well to state that the pieces bearing them are, in a manner, portraits which, under my fingers, have sometimes taken on the guise of good likenesses, and that the majority of these opportune titles are applicable rather to the amiable originals that I desired to represent than to the copies I made of them.

Portraits in music! In truth, a bold and novel idea in the eighteenth century! As we see, Couperin, when tracing these tone-pictures, avowedly copied them from models among which he lived. In making their acquaintance, therefore, we ourselves are introduced into the society with which he was intimately bound up.

He was an intimate of kings; now, with the first page of his book, we find ourselves in the presence of Louis XIV himself with that stately introduction, "l'Auguste," followed by a sarabande, "La Majestueuse." Surcharged with ornaments, the melodic line advances in measured steps, with sovereign gravity; the musical portrait, however, displays something besides a peruke and courtly habiliments, we can also distinguish the details of a physiognomy; together with the music, we perceive the man.

After the King, the ladies. The portraits in this gallery are many and various. Some there are, near to the throne, who still make a brave and brilliant show. And there are others who do not shrink from exhibiting a wholly feminine sensibility.

But it was to the least adorned of these that Couperin lent the most of grace:—to "La Nanette," all simplicity and fresh youth; "Manon," not lacking in delicate humor; "Sœur Monique," innocent and tender, without *arrière-pensée*; "l'Aimable Thérèse," "La Tendre Fanchon," "La Divine Babiche," "La Fine Madelon"; now melancholy, now nonchalant or roguish; such were the *petites amies* of Couperin.

Again, he depicts groups whose collective grace is no less, and whose collective movements are cleverly concerted; e.g., "Les Matelots Provençales," whose finely modulated theme has the fresh vigor of the best French music; "Les Nonettes," in the two successive groups, the blondes and the brunettes; "Les Pèlerines," who, while avoiding evaporation in the misty atmosphere of Watteau, none the less press onward towards Cythera in a gay festival procession which, by its consecutive movements, brings them at last to Lovers' Land.

Furthermore, there are picturesque tableaux, occasionally of figures in caricature—"Le Gaillard Boiteux," "Le Drôle de corps," "Les Culbutes," of disjointed rhythms; or street-scenes like the heavy "Marche des Gris-vêtus" (the regiment of the Gardes-Françaises); "Les Calotins et les Calotines, ou la Pièce à tretous"; "Les Fastes de la grande et ancienne Ménestrandie," a musical narrative with satirical allusions to a dispute in which François Couperin was entangled when a youth.

Frequently the scenes depicted present the life of a more polished society, that of the eighteenth century; we note "Les



Vieux Seigneurs," followed by "Les Jeunes Seigneurs ci-devant les Petits-Maitres," the former discovering themselves through the oldtime rhythm of a "Sarabande grave," the latter by a gavotte. Then, "Les Petits Âges," "Les Folies Françaises ou les Dominos," "Le Petit Deuil ou les Trois Veuves," and many another piece of exquisite delicacy, now and again give rise to developments that are as ingenious as their musical themes are charming.

Having viewed these sights of the town, Couperin sought repose in the country, though not as an indifferent spectator. For he listened to the lay of "Le Rossignol en Amour," "Le Rossignol Vainqueur," "La Linette Effarouchée," "Les Fauvettes Plain-tives"; he caught the faintest rustlings, the most imperceptible movements, of Nature; "Les Abeilles," "Les Papillons," "Le Moucheron," "Les Roseaux," "Les Ondes," all yield a tenuous sonority, a rhythm, that he felt, distinguished, and reproduced on the clavecin. He does not disdain to tarry before scenes of rustic life; he combines the tradition of pastoral song with the most artistic forms, and fashions therefrom his little tableau of the "Bergeries," a work that won the most precious of encomiums—that of Bach.

Everything is deserving of mention:—noises or rhythms emanating from objects met on the road; "Les Petits Moulins à Vent," "Le Carillon de Cythère," "Le Réveil-matin," "Les Barricades Mystérieuses," "Les Tic-Toc-Choc ou les Maillotins"; a tableau of war (a war in laces), "La Triomphante," where the clavecin sounds fanfares; then the mythological subjects—"Les Gondoles de Delos," "Les Sylvains," "Les Satyrs Chèvre-pieds"—in which, one after the other, the clavecin takes us through the antique saltation down to the *danse galante* of the eighteenth century.

One of the outstanding features of this clavecin-style is that arising from the *agréments* (ornaments) peculiar to it. They have given rise to much discussion. Some think that the principal notes, taken by themselves, represent the true line; that the ornaments added thereto are a sort of superfetation accounted for by the nature of the clavecin, one that they are tempted to suppress.

Such was not Couperin's opinion. His intent in this matter is clearly expressed. He published a book of a technical character, "L'Art de Toucher le Clavecin," and one might almost say that he undertook its composition only to sustain his thesis. He makes insistent mention of it in his prefaces. He says: "The clavecin has its properties, just as the violin has its own; though

it does not swell the tone, it has other advantages, which are precision, clarity, brilliancy, and wide range." It is of the *agréments* that he demands the means for supplying the deficiencies of the instrument; and by the care he takes in their interpretation is shown the importance that he ascribes to them. In fact, in the music of Couperin and that of all his contemporaries—and not only music for the clavecin, but for the voice, the violin, etc.—the embroideries coalesce with the main design; although added to it they become, in the last analysis, an integral part of it. They contribute towards giving this music its peculiar physiognomy.

Thus constituted by the instrumentalities proper to their time, and by the genius of a master capable of making such marvellous use of them, the *Pièces de Clavecin*, viewed as a whole, form a complete, homogeneous, compendious monument, worthy to be set beside masterworks whose only superiority to it lies in their proportions. Though it would be over-ambitious to assign them a place beside Beethoven's book of Sonatas, unique of their kind, they at least deserve to consort with "The Well-Tempered Clavichord," with Schumann's cycles, with the *Préludes* or *Études* of Chopin, and perchance with the works of certain moderns one might mention. In an Exposition of the Masterworks of Universal Art they should find a place, perhaps restricted in extent, but well to the front, on the cornice.

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Besides the *Pièces de Clavecin*, Couperin wrote works of an entirely different cast that do him equal honor. There are the Sonatas for three stringed instruments (violin and bass) with a simple accompaniment to be played on the keyboard instrument; they derive from a conception radically different from that of the works we have previously examined. Their author himself tells the story of their inception in a lively and humorous style. He says that while but a youth he heard Corelli's sonatas, that had just been introduced into France, and resolved to compose in this novel form. But, he goes on:

knowing the antipathy of the French for foreign novelties, and distrusting my own powers, I did myself a good service by telling a little white lie. I pretended that a relative of mine in the entourage of the King of Sardinia had sent me a sonata by a new Italian author. I arranged the letters of my name so as to form an Italian name as a substitute. The sonata was devoured with avidity, and I refrained from useless explanations. Feeling encouraged, however, I wrote some more, and my Italianized name won me great applause—by proxy.

Having kept these early works within reach, Couperin took them up again much later; not until towards the end of his life did he publish (in 1726) four sonatas, "Les Nations," three of them being constructed, in part, out of elements taken from his first essays.

The primitive sonata, as exemplified by Corelli, is itself divisible into two species—the *Sonata da chiesa* and the *Sonata da camera*. The former, of a severe and scholastic style, is an outgrowth of the ancient polyphonic traditions, and is built up in several different movements, generally linked pairwise; the latter is made up of dance-tunes and bears close resemblance to the Suite or Partita. The sonatas for solo violin by J. S. Bach—illustrious example!—are themselves to be classed as Sonatas, properly so called, and Partite, alternating between these forms. Such was already the form of the sonatas in "Les Nations," which are composed successively in the two styles, *sonatas da chiesa* alternating with *sonatas da camera*. But these latter were added later; the sonatas that Couperin wrote in his youth comprised only the former and more strict style. Thus the sonatas engraved in 1726 are combinations of youthful works with compositions of maturity; one of them, in fact, "l'Impériale," was wholly new. One might say that Couperin's entire life is reflected in these pages.

We feel strongly tempted to consider this last sonata as Couperin's musical chef-d'œuvre. Written when he had arrived at full maturity, it marks a notable broadening of his style. None of his works is more homogeneous, more sustained, more perfect. The sonata rightly so-called contains a slow episode in 3-2 time, a movement of genuine inspiration that soars to heights attained only by the greatest masters of the classic era; it is followed by a fugued piece whose theme is as refined as its developments are vigorous. In the Partita, as a sequel to a charming series of dance-airs, a long Chaconne develops, whose variations, incessantly renewed, seem inexhaustible. Taken altogether, these movements constitute a work of rare importance among Couperin's achievements; one which, in itself alone, entitles us to classify him in a very different category from that of the *petits-mâîtres*.

Couperin lived at the time when the age-long contention between French music and Italian music came to a head. What attitude did the master of the Chapelle of Louis XIV take to this contention, and what influence may it have exercised on his own art?

It might be thought that the mere fact that he wrote sonatas implies that Couperin had been swayed by ultramontane tenden-

cies. The Sonata, at least the *sonata da chiesa*, came from Italy; he himself did not deny it; he confirmed its origin by confessing that, in order to induce his French hearers to accept his earliest works in this form, he made them believe that they had been sent him from Turin. But, in so doing, he was diverting himself at the expense of an ignorant host of pretended connoisseurs, rather than admitting his own deference to foreign art. The truth is, that he sought to adopt a form different from those taught him by his French predecessors; but into this mould he poured a music that was his very own and in no way Italianized.

We have seen, moreover, that the sonatas of Couperin bear only a partial resemblance to those of Corelli. The portions added later to the primitive concepts are not at all Italian, either in form or in essence; viewing the works as a whole, we clearly perceive on going to the root of the matter that it is the new, added parts which constitute the substance.

This is not denying that Couperin was all his life keenly interested in the developments of Italian music. He did not imitate them, but he delighted in their charm, so different from that of French music. Of a reflective mind, striving to attain the happy medium in all things, he loved them both and refused to espouse the cause of either against the other, as if they were engines of warfare. It was his desire to bring them into harmony. Of this idea were born three works, written towards the close of his life, which add to their peculiar merits an interest due to being veritable professions of faith.

The title of the first, "Les Goûts Réunis," is in itself a declaration. And the preface (1724) states roundly:

Italian music and French music have long shared the Republic of Music. As for myself, I have always had esteem for things that deserved it, excepting neither authors nor nations; and the first Italian sonatas that appeared in Paris over thirty years ago and encouraged me to compose some later, did in no wise warp my judgment with respect to the works of Lulli or those of my ancestors, who will ever be more admirable than imitable. Hence, by the right bestowed on me by my neutrality, I continue to press onward under the favorable auspices that hitherto have guided me.

Having testified to the homage paid by our composer, near the end of his career, to the ancestors of whom he neglected neither the memory nor the example, we would also emphasize one word he penned, *neutrality*, which he strove to live up to. After which, putting precept into practice, he published a new work.

But do "Les Goûts Réunis," despite their avowed tendency, really mark a turning-point in the career of Couperin? To us it is quite imperceptible, nor do we see any change of direction. The work is a suite of concerted pieces in which the strings play their part, but which does not differ from the *Pièces de Clavecin* either in form or in spirit. They are still Suites of ancient dances wherein we once more note the inexhaustible invention of Couperin, but, at bottom, they exhibit no renaissance. Do the new titles, like *Sicilienne* or *Ritratto dell'Amore*, give us pause? Why, these are the merest disguises. It is not by such superficial imitations that deep-seated evolutions of art are made manifest.

The last number in "Les Goûts Réunis" is a grand sonata which, both in construction and other particulars, is in marked contrast to the sonatas that were Couperin's earliest models. However, he desired to place it under the patronage of the master whose genius he recognized, and to dedicate it to him as an act of reverence; he therefore named it "l'Apothéose de Corelli." It appeared, together with the rest of the book, in 1724. The next year Couperin published a similar piece, "l'Apothéose de Lulli," an "instrumental concert." This latter conception, as he says, impassioned him: "My Minerva urged me to undertake it when I had barely conceived the plan." In fact, these two "Apothéoses," written for the glorification of illustrious predecessors, present something positively new in Couperin's productive work, whose realization was well calculated to stimulate his zeal.

The author of the *Pièces de Clavecin* held aloof from the theatre throughout his career. But could he wholly escape its attraction? It was, assuredly, not with an eye on the stage that he conceived these musical tableaux. But how little was needed to adapt them to it! All the episodes are alive with movement, and, in view of their freedom in form, are devised in a fashion that would make it very easy to fit scenic evolutions to their music. Though the "characters" do not sing, they are none the less animated by the tones and the rhythms. In "l'Apothéose de Corelli" it is through the development of a cleverly counterpointed motive that the artist thanks Apollo for having admitted him to Parnassus; one can fairly see the gesture. The other "Apothéose" brings forward Lulli and Corelli; inspired by a seraphic rivalry, the two maestri seize their violins and begin to play, now antiphonally, now either accompanying the other; finally, in full accord, they unite their dual inspiration in a brilliant concert. Whereupon the god, drawing his conclusion as umpire, assures them that "the union of French with Italian taste should bring about the perfection of

music"; and this, indeed, is the "moral" of the poem—symphonic poem—the same that Couperin sought to evolve from his conception, and that lived in his own subconsciousness.

Couperin's spirit, indeed, dwelt on too high a plane to refuse recognition and admiration for the dissimilar creations of an alien art when brought to his notice. Does this mean that he, for all his eclecticism, did not hold fast in his heart a secret preference for the art sprung from his native soil, that of the goodly land of France, to which he was faithful? The story of his life and, weightier far, the intrinsic quality of his work, go to show that he never allowed himself to relax the ties that united him intimately with the genius of his race; that, in despite of seductions which, in other matters, he did not care to oppose, he sacrificed no whit of whatever was pure, sincere and profound in himself; and were one called upon to name the man who, in the history of music, was most representative of the French spirit, the name first to be called to mind would in all likelihood be that of Couperin le Grand.

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After the lapse of two centuries we are enabled to survey as a whole a monument of musical art constructed at a time so distant and so different from our own. The works of Couperin have undergone the vicissitudes common to all the works of man. At first they did not seem destined long to survive the admiration of contemporaries from whose midst they had arisen. Radical transformations in taste and thought took place at the very date of Couperin's death. Younger than he by only fifteen years, but seeming to belong to the following generation, that other master who shared with him the merit of being most representative among the earlier French musicians, Rameau, brought new gifts to his art. True, his music possesses neither the refined *esprit* nor the exquisite delicacies of that of Couperin; but in it there lies a something more vivid, more ardent, more active. The best of his clavecin-pieces have found their true sphere in passing to the stage and becoming *airs de ballet*. Now, take note of the epoch at which a perception of this difference made its appearance. It was in 1733 that Rameau brought out his first opera, and in that year Couperin died. The one disappeared just as the other entered on a new career!

Here commences another evolution in French music. It was opposed by foreign influences that speedily gained the upper hand and finally triumphed. What weight had the art of a musician



who could rightly be treated as a *petit-maitre*, as contrasted with that of Pergolese, Gluck, Mozart and Beethoven? It was thought archaic; it was flagellated as representing the rococo style. Protest must be raised against this latter appraisal; the term serves to define a vitiated taste wholly foreign to Couperin. It may be that the ornaments wherewith the music is surcharged might inspire the notion; but, beneath these, as we have plainly seen, there is a soul, there is a genius, that distinguishes it from those capricious productions whose sole value was derived from a transitory fashion. But, aside from this unjust idea, it is true enough that Couperin's art became too strange to the tendencies of the succeeding generations to give them further pleasure. Even progressive mechanical improvements hastened its decline; the invention of the piano-forte gave the final blow to all music conceived for the harpsichord, rendering it practically and immediately unavailable. Before the end of the eighteenth century, his music was forgotten.

It should be remarked, however, that even during this period of oblivion the name of Couperin had never ceased to be pronounced with respect. It always bore a suggestion of a far-away, charming epoch, and there was an obscure feeling that he had represented, in music, its most perfect realization.

To-day, observing more closely, we perceive that he was in very deed, and more than any other, the man of his time. And he is representative of it not alone in its pettier aspects. François Couperin participated in the life of two centuries, that of Descartes and that of Voltaire; he was almost a compatriot and contemporary of La Fontaine; such are the associations which, better than extended explanation, characterize him and place him. Of a reflective, well-ordered, reasonable (if not rationalistic) cast of mind, and a calm, upright spirit, he still lives in works wherein all aspects of French intelligence and sensibility are mirrored. By virtue of his art he is the representative of the supremely classic age.

The conceptional evolution that has taken place during the twentieth century has been most favorable to his rehabilitation. Is this man's success in coming to the front necessarily detrimental to other works and other masters admired in the past? The legitimate cult of which Couperin is to-day the object does not involve, as a necessary result, the dethronement of Beethoven, of Wagner, of Berlioz, of César Franck. The domain of our art is wide enough to hold them all; each has a right to his own place; there is no need to set up a hierarchy among them, any more than a common measure. So let us rejoice that the old French master profits by this reaction, that turned the tide in his favor.

Nietzsche, who, after enduring the imperious constraint of another art, shook it off, gave an admirable definition of this tendency. Having protested with a certain virulence against "this romantic disorder, this hodge-podge of tones beloved of the cultivated populace with its aspirations after the elevated, the sublime, the involved," he declared his preference for a "malicious, buoyant, fluid art, divinely artificial, an art that coruscates like a clear flame in a cloudless sky. We know [he adds] what is requisite for that: serenity, every kind of serenity, my friends!" Here, in few words, we have a perfect characterization of Couperin.

Our modern or, rather, modernist epoch, having overthrown so many criteria, felt the need of placing itself under a patronage to which it could lay legitimate claim—and thus returned to him. This influence has contributed not a little towards restoring him to the position in his century which he merits and which is his of right. Musicians who, perhaps, had paid but scanty attention to his works, now felt themselves profoundly moved by the sheer force of intuition, and, while writing in a wholly modern spirit, evolved equivalents for the ancient forms. Thus it came about that Ernest Chausson, trained though he was in the Bach tradition, wrote a "Concert" of ancient dances manifestly inspired by the tradition of the "Suites," "Ordres," and "Concerts," of the musicians of Louis XIV. Maurice Ravel has even invoked the very name of the master in composing the "Tombeau de Couperin" (prélude, fugue, rigaudon, menuet, etc.), in which for all his fervent modernism, the tenuity of the design, the transparency of the web, the fluidity of the intricate and elusive lines, all seem to connect this contemporary work with the ancient model by intangible though sensible bonds.

Must we mention Debussy? The analogies between his Hermetic art and Couperin's circumspect workmanship have often been pointed out. He himself has avowed them, paying due homage. "Why," so he says, "should we not regret that charming style of writing music that we have lost, finding it, indeed, impossible to revive the art of Couperin? It avoided every redundancy, and possessed *esprit*; we no longer dare to show *esprit*."—Such regret is now a thing of the past; Debussy himself has helped rediscover the secret that he thought lost.

Couperin, therefore, who was fond of saying "my ancestors," has had, two centuries after his death, successors who can legitimately claim him as their spiritual ancestor. He forms with them one great family of art—the French family. No fact could

be more helpful in concluding this study, whose aim has been to determine the place of the Couperins in history:—after two centuries of actual existence, their line has been prolonged down to the present day. It is assuredly a most unusual phenomenon, this perpetuity of a genius that is well-nigh consubstantial with that of a race.

*(Translated by Theodore Baker.)*

## THE SENSE OF POWER IN THE ARTIST AND IN THE CHILD

By MARGIT VARRÓ

**F**ROM the preponderance of the emotional life in artists and children, and their not fully accomplished—or only partially successful—adaptation to the realities of existence, results a predominance of the imaginative faculty. The intensification of this faculty tends to widen the cleft between fact and fancy; and this, in turn, serves to aggravate the manifold tensions ever present in the normal soul-life of the average man.

These psychic tensions are caused by the antagonism of the active mental powers, by the fluctuating contention of secret emotional processes and obscure vital impulses with the definite wishes and strivings of the personality, on the one hand, and, on the other, by the sum and intensity of the spiritual powers urgent for action and the possibility of their effective gratification.

An excess of tension produces discontent and endangers psychic balance; hence a continual urge in the psyche for its alleviation, which gives a sense of oblectation. Tension is relieved either by converting a part of the elements causing the tension into motion, or word, or deed, or else by a temporary readjustment of the psychic powers, so that those standing the test of self-criticism gain the upperhand and reveal themselves to our consciousness as fancies, inspirations, and the like. If one does not succeed in bringing the psychic tensions to a normal balance, the impulse is given for multiform disorders of the psyche. According to Prof. Freud, certain neurotic symptoms are actually to be regarded as conceptions of readjustments that were attempted, but unsuccessful—we might say, thrown off the track.

The proportion in which the tensions and the most natural mode of reconciling them are blended, differs in the child, in the normal and abnormal adult, and in the artist.

The need for an adjustment of the tensions that lurk in the obscure depths of the soul finds, in the child, its most natural satisfaction in play, in all sorts of "naughty" eruptive outbreaks of feeling, and in fantastic imaginings that also play an important, though generally little noted, part in the life of the normal adult. This same need is one of the chief impulses for artistic creation,

although not the sole motive. The peculiar psychic constitution of the artist exhibits itself precisely in this—that he feels an irresistible urge to alleviate his psychic tensions (both subjective, and between self and the outside world) in such wise, that thereby his delight in alleviation shall be communicable to others, and not confined to himself. He seeks to attain this end by realizing the process of readjustment in the form of a work of art, giving it tangible shape. Should he succeed in achieving complete expression, in his art-work or creative feat, for that which fired his soul with intensest inspiration, he will feel, together with that sense of well-being that always accompanies the adjustment of tension, the joy of a sense of his own power.

The artist, therefore, enjoys a certain sovereign sense of power, in that he confronts Reality—whereon he is always dependent in one way or another—with his work or creative feat as a new Reality created by himself. His sense of power is based on the consciousness of having wrought a change in the outside world by means of his own imagination and his own volition; of having added, out of his own strength, something to that Reality whose crushing ascendancy is so hard to bear. For similar reasons, the child seeks to possess himself of this sense of power, but his procedure is simpler than the artists's. Avoiding the roundabout way through Deed and Work, he merely imagines things, and in conception experiences those very changes in the outside world that he fancies he has brought about by his power of will. For example, a five-year-old child, to punish his mother, shuts his eyes and then feels entirely satisfied because "now she has to sit in the dark."

In the artist, the intensity of the sense of power depends in part upon his own estimate of the value of his work or creative feat, and in part upon its manifest effect on the outside world, i.e., upon its discriminative reaction. The child usually neglects the second factor entirely, and ascribes to his wish and will a positive effect, without caring for affirmation from the outside world; his sense of power is self-sufficient, being rooted simply and solely in self-estimation. The child readily accepts the intent for the deed, showing herein a certain mental kinship with the dilettante, for whose artistic activities the selfsame attitude is in evidence.

The child feels no urgent need for giving form to (objectifying) the creations of his fancy, or for sharing his experiences with others; indeed, he actually holds aloof from communicating them, although he is fully persuaded of the reality of his fanciful creations. (I myself, at the age of five, firmly believed that I

could fly downstairs, and that I had so flown repeatedly; also, that I had seen pigeons clad in rose-colored tissue-paper in our garden; but I kept all this carefully hidden from the "grown-ups.")

The dread of telling about such things probably comes from an unconscious apprehension that the belief in one's own power might be shaken by the challenging authority of the outside world. And so the child closes the cycle of psychic experiences, won through his sense of power, within his own breast. He regards himself as the prime mover in a series of happenings that he exteriorizes; only in conception does he experience their effect, which he estimates at his own good pleasure. Here it may be briefly noted, that most of the childish imaginative plays are merely an objectivation of the same basic procedure adapted to Reality, despite the fact that the delight in play—for the child the supreme joy of readjustment—lends them their characteristic stamp.

In the artist the sense of power is first awakened when he succeeds in giving form to his imaginings, in realizing them and communicating them to others, and this in so suggestive a manner that others must experience what he has experienced; "they must believe it"—not till then is the cycle closed.

The child, who is usually unable to exercise his power in any way on the outside world, isolates himself from it, so as not to have to doubt himself, and thus is unavoidably moved to overestimate himself. The artist cannot avoid contact with the outside world, yet he, too, has a certain secret dread of its authority. If it shows no inclination to follow him, he, like the child, isolates himself, and generally with equal success. The child, when an estimation of his incipient artistic activities is in question, is author and audience in one and the same person. One example among many: A ten-year-old boy, who improvises very cleverly on the piano, makes a bow (only when he thinks himself unnoticed, of course) before taking his seat, applauds when he has played his piece to an end, and thereafter bows again in acknowledgement.—This self-assertive anticipation of indorsement awaited from others, which in the child's case merely provokes an indulgent smile, produces an unpleasing, laughable, childish effect, in the case of an adult. As when the celebrated (and equally famous for his eccentricities) piano-virtuoso P., after playing pieces by Chopin, thus addresses himself on the platform: "So does P. play Chopin!"—or, gazing fondly on his hand: "P., you did that well!—ah, what a hand!"



For we do not allow the artist the same latitude that the child may claim as his undisputed right; he (the artist) must not set his subjective estimate of his own feat in place of the objective estimate of the outside world (either present or future); he must neither interchange nor confound the two opinions.

As for the child, just because he believes in his fancied power, and therefore can do without the recognition of the outside world, his estimate of his own feats is quite independent of the latter. Not so with the artist. In his case any disparity between his own estimate and that of another, between self-satisfaction and public recognition, may lead to serious psychic complications.

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The criteria for the effect, on the world at large, of a work or an artistic offering, are, first, the attitude of the general public, and, secondly, the opinions of connoisseurs; then the pronouncements of professional critics in journals and magazines, material gain, and social success. Should this effect not accord with the expectations that the artist, on the strength of his own estimate, cherished with regard to his work or his interpretation—that is, if his sense of power is not supported by outward success—there is imminent danger that reactions prejudicial to his further artistic activity may ensue, the reaction differing according to the artist's temperament.

In one case, the artist's creative urge suffers from the disparity between his own estimate and that of others; true, he holds fast to his own favorable opinion, but he nevertheless withdraws sullenly and interrupts his artistic efforts for a longer or shorter time with the supercilious reflection: "It's too good for you—that's all!"

In a second case, the artist may continue his efforts, though with a tinge of defiant spite: "You don't want me? We'll see about that!" This reaction, an involuntary attempt to make up for the lack of external appreciation by heightening the estimate of self, seems the more promising of the two, yet hardly favorable for an untrammelled artistic activity.

There is a third case, in which lack of success moves the artist to a revision of his subjective estimate of his work, with the result that he identifies himself with the "objective," rejective opinion of the outside world and, as a consequence, loses his belief in his talent, loses his sense of power, and with it his creative ability.

These three alternatives referred to cases where the disparity arose from the fact that the external effect (objective estimate) did not measure up to the internal estimate (subjective expectation).

Equally serious psychic conflicts and inhibitions may also arise when the objective estimate is more favorable than one's own. All the evidences of exterior success—applause of public and press, financial profit, etc.—may materialize; but if, for the artist, the success attained is not justified by his subjective estimate of his work and by the sense of power inherent therein, he will be unable to identify himself with the more favorable opinion. From this easily arises, more especially with interpreting artists, a sense of inferiority, a fit of despondency, even after the greatest success.

Again, the reaction to such a disparity between one's own estimate and that of the outside world may differ according to the individuality. (Here I refer chiefly to interpretative artists.)

One may be spurred thereby to do the best that in him lies, that he may subjectively measure up to the more favorable opinion and thus gain a sense of satisfaction. By this means the conflict is allayed.

Another enjoys the sense of power thrust upon him by outward success uneasily and with an evil conscience. He accepts as his the liberties and prerogatives accorded to successful talent, but always with the feeling that he is a usurper who appropriates what belongs, not to himself, but to more gifted men, who feel that they have a right to it by virtue of the sense of power imparted to them by their talent. With regard to this state of mind a young artist of good repute remarked: "... and so one enters on one page success after success, and on the other that one is a scurvy fellow." And after a moment's pause he added thoughtfully: "Maybe one wouldn't feel so mean, if one only had more talent."

In extreme cases, when the moral uneasiness has grown to be akin to a feeling of guilt, almost as if success had been won by imposture, it may come to pass that the artist renounces contact with the public altogether. In this exaggerated attitude we see a counterpart to the attitude of the child, who, in matters of imagination, avoids contact with the outer world because he fears that others will not believe in him as he believes in himself; the artist avoids such contact because he does not find within himself that belief in his own powers that the outer world proffers him.

It would appear, therefore, that the artist's sense of power, despite this apparent contradiction, is also more dependent on his self-estimate than on recognition from the outer world.

True, his craving for power is rooted, as in the child's case, in the wish to gain an exceptional position, to be loved and esteemed by all; yet he, unlike the child, feels it to be his duty to justify and earn this love through that which he creates and is, whereas the child assumes it as a matter of course—demands it, in fact—without other return than its reciprocation.

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The artist's sense of power is nourished from various sources. In the creative artist it is his conviction of having dispensed something of value that enables him to retain his self-esteem and his sense of power even when he finds neither the love nor the recognition that he thinks he deserves. In the evolution of his consciousness of power, the immediate contact with the outer world plays, after all, a less important part than with the interpretative artist; paramount, for him, is his victorious emergence from the struggle with the material he moulds—the uplifting consciousness that he has moulded this stubborn force into a satisfying representation of that which his fancy had conceived.

For the interpretative artist the sense of power is a product of divers factors unequal in importance. The closer his individuality approaches the virtuoso-type, the stronger is the influence of the less important ones. The main sources of his sense of power are, (1) the enravishing effect of his interpretation on his audience, whose conditional responsiveness and eager participation he feels instinctively; likewise the suggestive influence brought to bear on his co-workers, members of the orchestra, etc.; (2) his absolute technical mastery over the executive resources of interpretation, such as the instrument, the voice, or his own body.

The genuine artist, strong in the consciousness of his lofty rôle as an interpreter, also finds a grateful enhancement of his personal sense of power in his identification with the revered Masters, whereby he involuntarily puts himself on a plane with them; and furthermore in his happy consciousness that he, while singing or playing, most nearly approaches the ideal of his own individuality that he cherishes.

While the creative artist's sense of power is a sort of fatherly pride, the interpretative artist resembles the child. The Self in the child, and the sense of power bound up therewith, attain their

highest pitch through his identification of himself with that which, for him, is strongest and mightiest—his father. The executant has a similar experience when he succeeds in identifying himself to the full with Bach and Beethoven, or—in more general terms—with his spiritual fathers.

In the virtuoso, the weightiest factor for his sense of power is, after the effect on the audience (this often being a mere matter of surprise or amazement), confidence in his technical infallibility. He does not regard himself as an interpreter, but as an absolute potentate; his person, his conception, his reproduction, are for him the matters of chief interest—and ought to be for others. Hence he is prone to arrogate to himself—frequently without being aware of it—a supremacy over the composer which, at bottom, is of no advantage to either. In place of the feeling of happiness that the interpreter enjoys through the intrinsic elevation of his own individuality, the virtuoso experiences the so-called delight in play which, on the one hand, is akin to the child's delight in his own plays, and, on the other hand, resembles the sense of zest resulting, in any sport, from the successful carrying-out of some muscular feat. With the interpreter, therefore, the sense of alleviation during performance is chiefly of a psychic nature, while with the virtuoso it is more physical.

The sense of power in the interpretative musician, whatever the class to which he may belong, is generally almost unwarrantably heightened by the circumstance that, because of his direct contact with the public, he wins fame and recognition more readily than the creator of the works he performs. This often leads to a certain overweening presumption in interpretative artists, culminating in the sense that it is they who take the composer under their "protection" (this, of course, only so long as he is comparatively unknown), and they even claim the lion's share of the applause received by the work of some recognized master.

The personal sense of power, in point of fact, draws pure nourishment for the creative artist alone, from the well-springs of his own individuality. There is always something factitious in the mere interpreter's sense of power; the masterwork he performs and the composer he interprets confer a part of their power and potency upon him, and this the more effectively, the more profoundly he has penetrated the work performed.

The above is not said in disparagement of the interpretative artists; their power is factitious only in the same sense as the power of the priest who, in the belief of primitive peoples, became divine—god-like—because he had partaken of divinity.

Besides the intrinsic factors in the sense of power (success, fame, money), and the intrinsic factors (talent, will to work, favorable estimate of self), a social factor should be mentioned, this being the participation in the collective sense of power of an association, a group, a movement. In the artist (as in the child) such participation supplies the weaker what he lacks in the way of self-esteem, and urges the stronger to assume the rôle of a leader. It may happen, to be sure, that the stronger artist is not strong enough to maintain himself unaided; as the head of a group—to which he lends his strength, but from which it is returned to him redoubled—he can play a prominent part in the artistic life of his time. There are various motives that may induce an artist to join a group and participate in a given movement.

The inducement is greatest in the case of comparatively weak talents. For if they were conservative and acted as gleaners after the harvest (as they are), they would remain wholly unnoticed; but when they come out as adherents to some "new" movement that attracts general interest, something of the attractive force of the unconventional falls to their share and lends them, under certain conditions, an ephemeral importance, an appearance of power, that vanishes with the extinction of the star or comet that lent them its light.

With some, the adherence to a group or movement is an outcome of the sympathy they bear for all radical or revolutionary intellectual endeavors; they desire to serve the idea of progress, of renovation, of breaking with the traditional, by joining others of like mind. The only trouble is, that even the purest of progressive intentions do not suffice to produce progressive works, more especially when the artist (whether from a sense of solidarity, or from lack of originality) attaches himself to the expressional style set up as a model by the (for him) leading and authoritative personality. Such "progressives from conviction," who strive to carry a movement to victory and power, may promote the idea itself; they are seldom of use to Art.

Sometimes, however, there arises a genuine, powerful talent who is soon acclaimed as leader by swiftly following disciples, or, spurred on by his own strong will to power, who himself assumes the leadership of an artistic movement. In the latter case, there is always the possibility of a clash between the will to power and the artistic conscience. Upon the triumph of the one or of the other it depends, whether the leader shall maintain his leadership while wholly or partly sacrificing his most intimate artistic convictions, or shall obey his conscience and go his own way

unheedful of the social influence of the group or clique he has left behind him, and careless whether the brethren go along, or not.

*Sub specie æternitatis*, the innermost well-springs of conception, the artist's very own, whence he draws inspiration, are always mightier than the mightiest current with which he may swim. Great achievements in art and progress have always been accomplished solely through the power of individual genius—however much the unwitting psychic coöperation of intellectual copartnership may have helped;—never through collective production, mutual admiration, and a common striving after power. "The man of might is mightiest alone."

(Translated by Theodore Baker.)



## MUSIC FOR A BETTER COMMUNITY

By J. LAWRENCE ERB

**I**N discussions about music, whether from the artistic or the educational angle, the emphasis is, too commonly, laid upon its professional aspects. The performer, the composer, the producer, the critic, all seem to be blind in one eye—the one which should look out toward the public. Until comparatively recent times, music was the prerogative of the noble and the wealthy; but so was citizenship, for that matter. The world has, however, moved a long way since the French Revolution shook up Europe and humanity in general as it had not been shaken for centuries before and as it has not been shaken since, until our recent holocaust.

The gradual but relentless destruction of aristocracies which has characterized the progress of civilized society for the past two centuries or a little less has brought about, gradually but inevitably, changes in many other directions. We have naturally been most impressed with those phenomena which are most apparent; but the less obvious, such as those affecting spiritual and esthetic values and relations, have not less surely felt the influence of the movement. Musicians, for reasons more or less apparent, have, in the main, held tenaciously to the spirit and traditions of the past; they have exhibited a backward-looking tendency, which has left them often curiously eddied in a moving world. There has been plenty of movement, but too often in circles, rather than forward.

The conspicuous development in human relations during the past one hundred and fifty years has undoubtedly been in the direction of democracy. That considerable portions of the race have, ostrich-like, buried their heads in the sand so that they cannot see the obvious, does not change the facts. In music and art as well as in industry and politics the masses, rather than the classes, rule.

Since conditions are as they are, it behooves the musician of whatever phase of activity to look about him and consider how he may adjust himself to the spirit of the times; for art, too, must reflect and serve its period, if it is to exist at all. Whereas, in the past, the musician's task was to please his patron, whether nobleman, prelate or man-of-means, to-day he succeeds in proportion

as he serves and pleases the composite patron known as The Public. Under the old conditions, The Public counted little or not at all; but to-day, more and more, The Public is arbiter. The personal allegiance of the musician in the olden time now gives way to a highly impersonal, though, perhaps, scarcely less intimate relation.

In view of these developments, the increasing importance of Community Music becomes apparent; not what is commonly understood by the term, but music which serves its new Master, the Community, in its various relations and activities. The present use of the term is neither sufficiently inclusive nor sufficiently discriminating. Mass singing of familiar songs, valuable as it is in certain directions, does not exhaust or even do justice to a term which should include nearly every phase of musical activity; moreover, the rough-and-ready standards attending Community Singing in the past are entirely inadequate as criteria for any type of performance except what is spontaneous and inexpert. This is not to say that Community Singing, as at present understood, has no place in the scheme of things. On the contrary, there might well be more of it. But it represents the rudimentary phase of something much more elaborate and worth while and should not be permitted to usurp too large a place in the scheme.

Community Music properly includes all forms and phases of music which serve the Community and grow out of it. It is therefore of the utmost concern to everyone actively engaged in music to discover just what goes to make up this composite. Even for those whose tastes do not incline toward the crowd, it is not wise to withdraw into a precious little coterie and enjoy themselves too exclusively in the rarer musical atmosphere, while all around there exists another different musical condition whose influence is ever increasing. One cannot escape the spirit of the times. Either one is caught up with the crowd in the current worship of Jazz, vulgar as it no doubt is in the main, or else one aligns oneself with the ultra-modern composers, whose work too often seems to lack even the essential vitality of vulgarity. The spirit of the times overtakes and inundates us, whether we flatter ourselves as superior—"High-brow"—or abase ourselves as among the untutored; whether we resort to the inner shrines of the most rarefied musical atmosphere, or seek musical inspiration at the cabaret, the vaudeville or the revue. The problem is not, whether we shall or shall not align ourselves with current musical activities, but how we as individuals and communities can get the most out of them.

What is the proper place of music in community life, and how can it be made to function more efficiently? How does the problem touch each of us individually, and what is our duty and privilege in the newer adjustment?

Perhaps the first reaction to the changing spirit should be a more frank attitude toward music. Since we cannot avoid it or, without deliberately shunning civilized society, escape its influence, it might be better to study what music does or can or should do to the average American. This depends of course upon his contacts with it. Taken by and large, the urban American meets music at many angles. If he goes to the movie, it is his constant companion; if he resorts to the musical comedy or vaudeville, it is scarcely less in evidence. In the "legitimate" theatre, he may escape it, or he may not. If he takes his diversion more actively, on the dance floor, or if he indulges in the "daily dozen," music is the very life-giving spirit. The church, the fraternal organization, the social gathering, all make use of music, often finding it absolutely essential. At home, the talking-machine or the radio inundate the atmosphere, in and out of season. The rural inhabitant may escape the theatre, but the chances are that in every other relation he is as much exposed to music as his city brother. Even to the remote wilderness the phonograph and the radio have penetrated, so that the uttermost parts of the earth may and do resound to the strains of music. Often fortunately, this is of the finest kind, though too frequently, it must be admitted, of a less worthy variety. Notice, too, that, in most cases, the listener is subjected to its influence when he is in a passive, receptive mood, the more ready to respond to its suggestions.

One might naturally expect that, where an influence so constant, so pervasive, so universal and, withal, admittedly so powerful, is at work, the social, religious or educational leaders—someone at least—might be interested in seeing that it works under the proper conditions, perhaps under proper restrictions, and through proper means. On the contrary, except for those whose interest is primarily commercial, there is no supervision of music as to its quality or appropriateness, no scientific study of its ways and means, no slightest interest in it at all from the esthetic or inspirational side. It is a necessary accompaniment to most social and recreational and religious activities; but, so long as it does not cost too much and nobody objects to what is performed, what is everybody's business is, as usual, nobody's. Managers of theatres and dance-halls, chairmen of social and music-committees, have

discovered that, in the main, crude performance will not be tolerated; so they see to it that the musical staff is *technically* adequate. But beyond that they have little interest, so long as the patrons continue to patronize them; nor is it to be expected that they *should* have.

Admitting at the outset that the cure for present unsatisfactory musical conditions lies almost entirely in education, it does not follow that the machinery for carrying on the education to the best advantage is the present educational machinery in its present form. To begin with, the adult is as much (or more) in need of education as the child; and the present educational machinery does not reach the adult. Moreover, the methods which work more or less successfully with the child, already "caught" and plastic to the hand of the teacher, are probably not at all adapted to adults of an infinite variety of tastes and conditions. Besides, they have long since left behind the school-room and all for which it stands and will, heaven willing, never return to it as pupils. Perhaps the adult is no more unwilling to undergo educational processes than is the child, but at least he is in a position to absent himself from the scenes of their application without fear of the law's consequences.

The successful business-man gets business by *attracting* it. The propagandist for a good cause must make the same sort of appeal. The musical world itself furnishes plenty of examples of the force of attractive publicity. Doubtless, tens of thousands of musically uninterested American males are annually prevailed upon to spend their good money to hear, let us say, Paderewski or Heifetz or some other stellar attraction. Do they go because of their zeal for good music and do they come away from the concert converted into music "fans"? Not exactly. They go because the insistent publicity has made them curious and perhaps a wee bit ashamed that they have never heard So-and-so; and they come away to brag of the price of the ticket, the size of the crowd, the mannerisms of the artist—and how bored they were with the "high-brow" music (incidentally just a little proud of their boredom as proof that they are "he-men" and no "high-brows"). I may be in pessimistic mood (though I have no reason to believe that my digestion is not functioning), but it is my opinion that, if the element of attractive publicity were eliminated from concert management, artists, even of the first rank, would find it hard to make profitable tours in the Land of the Golden Goose, and the Tired Business-Man would never know who *are* the artists that he should hear and brag about.

I mention this fact not to belittle publicity but to hold it up as the right and proper method to elevate the tone of our community music by *creating interest in it*. If the Music Trades have found it profitable on a national scale to coöperate in a great campaign for awakened musical interest through musical contests culminating in the Annual Music Week, it would seem as though the various music tradesmen and musicians in each community might take a leaf from their book and try a little coöperative propaganda on their own hook. The curse of the local music situation in nearly every community has been its unbridled competition, resulting in almost deadly jealousies and feuds that would, for intensity and singlemindedness, put the Kentucky mountaineers to shame. Cut-throat methods have done their perfect worst, so that it is difficult to find in many communities any musical coöperation whatsoever, except as the exigencies of the situation have driven certain individuals into alliance. Accepting competition as a necessary step in the evolution of the race, the next step should be prepared for and, wherever possible, taken:—coöperation, with or without organic union.

Assuming for the purpose of argument that community-mindedness has taken the place of selfishness and that the musical forces are, most of them, enlisted for action, what is the first step? Ninety-nine out of a hundred would answer spontaneously, "To look into and improve music-teaching, and especially the teaching in the schools." Yet I venture to say that in all but a small minority of cases that answer would be the wrong one. For the schools and studios represent about the only forces persistently and intelligently already at work to create the basis upon which community music must be built. Hence, in most cases, they may well be let alone, at least until they have had a chance to demonstrate whether or not they are capable of "swinging the job." True, in the smaller communities particularly, the Supervisor of Music in the Public Schools is often the logical person upon whom would devolve much of the leadership in community-music activity; but not always nor necessarily.

Community music demands the creation of new enthusiasms or the revival or modification of old ones. As before indicated, its appeal and service are primarily to adults, who are, after all, considerably in the majority in every normal community, though much current discussion would lead one to think otherwise. For that reason its business is to interest the adults and then to set them to work. No doubt there are those who are convinced that there is a "standardized" way of doing this, and that they are the

heaven-appointed monopolistic possessors of that way, ready to apply it—for a liberal consideration. But, while the consulting expert often brings new ideas into an old situation, yet the work of carrying out the ideas must in nearly every case devolve upon those already "on the job." It is to them, rather than to the expert, that one must after all look for results.

The aim of a community-music campaign should, in brief, be to create so widespread an interest in such a diversity of musical activities that *every individual* in the community may find an outlet and may be stimulated into musical expression. If, as we are assured by those who ought to know, music has a beneficent effect upon every person subjected to its influence, it is the business of community music to afford to each individual the fullest opportunity to come into contact with this beneficent influence in the most effective way. If, as we are also assured, the effect is so much more advantageous if the individual takes active part, that is, becomes a performer—the obvious business is to create every conceivable type and kind of organization and activity for musical performance. The revival or creation *de novo* of the singing-school and of the volunteer choir, the choral-society, and the organization for the performance of musico-dramatic works, the amateur band, the amateur orchestra, the *Männerchor* and the *Sängerbund*, the glee club, the mandolin club, the saxophone club, the ukulele club, the trumpet-and-drum corps, for group activities on the larger scale, or, on the other hand, the more intimate and more select chamber-music group, vocal as well as instrumental—all these and any others that the mind of man may devise or circumstances suggest, can and should add their contribution to the sum total.

One of the curses of American society at the present time is the *professionalizing* of our sports and diversions, our entertainments and amusements, so that the bulk of us are scarcely more than passive participants in that valuable and essential group of activities which are directly concerned with the play instinct. Amateurism in every direction is being crowded out by professionalism. We are losing the valuable relaxations and reactions which go with active participation. What this means to our nerves and dispositions, to our capacity to see straight and to think straight, as well as to enjoy life as we go, the psychologist is persistently dinning in our ears.

Ensemble music is perhaps the best all-the-year-round activity yet devised, in that it appeals to the play-instinct in its highest form (the artistic) and gives a direct emotional release, to say



nothing of its value as an inspirational and esthetic agent. Listening to music is not to be minimized; it has a host of values of the highest order. Yet, for genuine enjoyment and fullest inspiration, personal performance holds greater thrills and greater values. Doubtless everyone would agree that the members of Dr. Wolle's great Bach Choir in Bethlehem become better acquainted with Bach's masterpieces and fall more completely under their spell than is possible for the listeners, be they never so earnest and intelligent. The Bach Festivals and the great choral festivals the country over are among the most important leavening factors in producing that elusive something known as "musical atmosphere," and they are among the best types of community music. They annually acquaint thousands of individuals with the choral masterpieces in a way that cannot possibly be done by listening only.

The only caution which needs seriously to be sounded in connection with community-music activities is that *there is always danger of killing the interest by insisting too soon upon elevating the standards of taste*. Tastes will inevitably be improved, and the better and more intellectual type of music will displace the simpler and more commonplace; but it is a great mistake to insist or even to urge too soon in this direction. People—you and I, for example—do not react sympathetically to deliberate attempts either to patronize or to "elevate" them. Moreover, it is a question to what extent a man's diversions ought to be subject to revision or pressure aiming at their "improvement." Changes in taste, usually for the better, generally come as horizons widen and the mind grows; but, to be really valid, they must grow in the main spontaneously, watered, as it were, and with much delicate care, directed and pruned, but not forced or roughly dealt with.

The question of Community Supervisors or Directors is likely to arise in serious discussions of the subject. This is a matter which can be properly decided only by the progress of events. There is no reason why in most cases a Committee of those most vitally interested is not competent to organize efficiently for community service. However, where enthusiasm and funds, and the magnitude or complexity of the problem, justify, there is no reason why a properly qualified person should not be employed, provided he can be found.

We are all to a startling extent creatures of our environment; therefore it is highly important that the environment be made right. It is the business of every citizen to contribute toward the public welfare. Those who believe in music and its value

should coöperate to provide in its manifold phases that which shall make and preserve its spiritual values, shall add to the amenities of life by creating a stimulating and agreeable collective social activity, and shall make Home and the Home-Town not only the most sacred, but also the most popular, place in the world.

All these things music does and can do when- and wherever it is allowed to develop in a free and sympathetic atmosphere. All these things are not only desirable, but essential for the upbuilding of a higher type of community life. It is therefore advisedly and with a vivid hope that every well-wisher, every constructive thinker, turns to the musician, professional and amateur alike, and to every friend and patron of the art, to concentrate their energies, to lend a hand, to coöperate in providing in adequate and efficient form what may justly be called "Music for a Better Community."

## FOUR COMPOSERS OF PRESENT-DAY ITALY

By GUIDO M. GATTI

### 1. MARIO CASTELNUOVO TEDESCO

MARIO CASTELNUOVO TEDESCO began to be talked of in 1914, that is, since his piano-piece *Questo fù il Carro della Morte* was published, the author then being nineteen years old. Next year he compelled, beyond all dispute, the consideration of musicians by a series of lyric *Coplas*, which revealed him not only as a musician of individual temperament, but as having a mastery of resources and a sense of formal perfection positively amazing in a youth of twenty.

And in sober truth, on reading Castelnuovo's earliest works one is astounded at not meeting with any of those exuberances and vacillations peculiar to youth, or those extravagances that mark an as yet undeveloped individuality and uncertainty of intention. In the first period of effervescence there lives in every artist a potentiality, not the potency, of art; a vivid emotionality, not a purposeful and controlled artistic imagination. In consequence, he pours his own emotion into moulds already fashioned, speaks a language sprinkled with borrowed words, and is incapable of self-control and the severe self-criticism that would hurt his feelings.

On Castelnuovo, *per contra*, no outside influence has been exerted or, at least, has left perceptible traces, if we except that of his master Pizzetti (a master in the widest and loftiest sense of the term, a master of art and of life, such as the masters of the Renaissance may have been). Influence of this sort, however, is contained within certain limits that I should like to call spiritual to distinguish them from a directly esthetic influence. Pizzetti was, for Castelnuovo, what an educator ought to be; having divined his pupil's ardent individuality, his sole aim was to quicken and stabilize it by the agency of his own overflowing humanism. And this is one of the salient characteristics of Castelnuovo's music—a breadth of human feeling which, brought to bear on us, strives and is able to awaken the generous emotions that often lie dormant in man, awaiting only a fraternal word for their awakening.

Hence, the temper of Castelnuevo's work is never indifferent, never a mere motive for picture-painting. Friendly voices speak from the pages where the drama of life is depicted with marked emotion; echoes are awakened of long ages of tenderness thrown away because men failed to divine it. The musician expresses it by intuitive comprehension; his imagination seizes and loves it; his soul has drawn from changeable and outward aspects, from the inarticulate voices of land and sea, that which jealously keeps intact for us, throughout the centuries, whatever is of human appeal. It is a restoration of faith. The drama ends in an aurora; a vast serenity, an infinite peace, pervades mankind; goodness has achieved the miracle.



One of the compositions that fill us with a most bountiful sense of this tranquil emotion in the presence of Nature is *Il Raggio Verde* (The Green Ray), technically one of the most finished of Castelnuevo's works and, in its inspiration, one of the freest. Here the musician is alone with his own emotion. Until then, to be sure, his creative inspiration had been roused by human and natural phenomena, but these had moved him through the expressional medium of affiliated, or presumably affiliated, artists. He produces lyrics in the *Briciole* and in *Cera Vergine* to poetry by Palezzeschi; descriptive prose in the *Novelle* from the *Vite* by Vasari; paintings in other pages inspired by primitive Florentine sources. In *Il Raggio Verde* it is Castelnuevo who hearkens to the voice of his own soul, and thenceforward interprets it with the decision of maturity. It is said that the sun, when sinking into the sea, sends out a final green ray; it was, therefore, a sunset that the musician had in mind to describe—neither more nor less. But with what individuality was the subject apprehended! While the composition warily avoids superfluous developments, the outcome was not one of those every-day pieces replete with poetic intentions, but quite often lacking in logical sense, of which impressionism is fond; it is well knit in the extreme, and yet so lending itself to expression as to follow fully and precisely all the multifold nuances of feeling and color. This sense of individuality and careful construction is heightened by a wisely calculated use of all musical resources at the disposal of the modern artist, though without an aprioristic exclusion of elements no longer *à la mode*, such as contrapuntal imitations (the first measures), common chords, etc.

Frankly descriptive in the first part, the piece grows deeper, more emotional and more human, in the second. But even the first pages bear the imprint of that broad conception of Nature in Castelnuevo that can be contained in a sentence—a sense of wide horizons, pure air, wholesome earth and an honest heart. The penetrating melancholy of the closing pages of *Il Raggio Verde* is not void of hope; its sadness is but a longing for the new dawn sure to come. Elsewhere than in *Il Raggio Verde* the musician has expressed his emotions when confronted by the spectacles of Nature, as in the above-mentioned *Cielo di Settembre*, or the *Cipressi* for piano; in the *Infinito* (to a poem by Leopardi) for voice and piano; in the two inspired choruses to the Virgilian *Bucoliche*; etc.

It seems opportune to speak of this reawakened fondness for choral composition, that Castelnuevo derives directly from his master, Pizzetti. For many years, choral writing has been sadly neglected in Italy; after the magnificent blossomtime of the Renaissance, one might aver that Italian vocal polyphony had vanished. Step by step, choral writing was limited to the schools and the liturgy, the latter being overbalanced more and more by the former.

Castelnuevo makes notable approaches to the purity of form in certain choral pages of Pizzetti's in two choruses on popular verses, and more particularly in *Cipresso*, where remembrance of the departed fraternal friend suddenly causes the pure line of the song to waver and vibrate with sorrowful anguish.

In the two Virgilian choruses, although the form is here and there not free from academicism, the spirit is wholly spontaneous, for the eternal youth of this eclogue was grasped by the musician for the vivification of his tone-painting. His ever-present sympathy for certain attributes of a sane romanticism, controlled, but not suffocated, by culture, is interpreted by a heartfelt tenderness. This Florentine modernism, which is not lacking—as we shall see—in the spirit of irony and satire proper to that citizenry, is in certain phases the immortal beloved of all fantasies of the past and all the mute, reposeful beauties that modern neurasthenia has not quite succeeded in making us forget. (Even to-day there are found in Castelnuevo's most powerful works traces of that ingenuous delicacy that pervades the dreams of the adolescent: illusions, ideals, yearnings, far-away princesses. And these are interpreted with a pungent yet fragrant expression of frankness, as in *Signorini*, those morbid sketches of ladies caressfully drawn with a trembling hand.)

The fundamental notes of the popular trend—virginity of fancy, profound humanism, bound up with a genial attitude of continual amazement at the aspects of Nature—would, as has been shown, inevitably attract our musician to those flowers of poesy; hereof were born the *Coplas* and *Le Stelle Cadenti*, and earlier still *Le Roy Loys*, the musician's first essay in the vocal line, which is mentioned especially because of the nuances of quiet humor it contains, which reappear later in clearer development.

This song of King Loys, a bloom of the Middle Ages, tells a tender tale of love, wherein the King's daughter, imprisoned in the tower for refusing her consent to the proposed marriage, feigns death, and is awakened by the handsome and enamoured cavalier "qui n'a pas vaillant six deniers," whereupon all ends happily. Castelnovo conceived the lyric as a series of little pictures, well detached, like a string of beads; in each an episode is narrated, and all are bound together by the tenuous thread of a theme several times repeated. Castelnovo's popular vein finds expression in a manner wholly unique; for him it does not mean a research for folk-tunes or a labor of transcription, but a bourne of new sensations. It would seem that with these *Stars* of a heaven so near and remote, a window had been thrown open and life had been seen in its eternal aspect—love. In these twelve *stornelli* and *rispetti* the musician rediscovered the ingenuous glorification of love, reflected in its every expression; now tragic, now burlesque, caught with boldest realism or slenderest symbolism, open to every hope, embittered by every delusion. We repeat, however, that the folk-tone of these lyrics is to be apprehended essentially as spirit, not as form; each lyric has its characteristic movement in correspondence with the tone of the poetry, and imposed upon a very definite rhythmic design. With this it straightway works out the finished picture, neither wandering nor losing itself behind other ideas. This character of directness affiliates *Le Stelle Cadenti* with the folk-spirit from which issued the *stornelli* and lends them a grateful flavor of the soil, wherewith are combined an uncommon impeccability and distinction of form.

The *Coplas* display greater variety, and bring out that new note of the musician's emotionality; still, they are comprehended in the same *aisthesis* as *Le Stelle*. Castelnovo did not allow himself to be carried beyond bounds by the facile fascination of Spanish popular rhythms; he was able to resist the voluptuousness of the Habanera and the sensuality of the Jota, and so perhaps is more the Florentine than ever, in certain clever touches



that make the sky of the *Coplas* lighter and brighter than that of Tuscany. However, this irony, this humor, is not bitter or skeptical; it is the tender "humour" of a Dickens rather than the splenetic jesting of a Swift. The impressions of a comic vein are intimately bound up with the unique character of the collection; they crop out in momentary suspensions and merry episodes wherein the emotion of love is presented under a different aspect, rather than set aside.

The latest creations of Mario Castelnuovo bring out in ever stronger relief his individuality; its characteristic notes are affirmed and liberated by a virtuosity that before was marked by a certain youthful self-sufficiency, and stand forth in their unmistakable essentiality. As noted above, these spiritual attributes may be reduced to three:—a frank, simple love for nature; a belief in the goodness of mankind and things created, and in the absolute necessity of this goodness, above all other qualities, that life may be fair and fruitful; lastly, a kindly humor, a keen irony, resulting from the philosophical observation of events and characters.

It is the first of these attributes that predominates in his *Canti all'aria aperta* (Songs in the Open Air) for violin; three numbers that form a kind of rustic suite, each bearing an unconventional but striking title plucked straight off the lips of the Tuscan peasant, like an artless exclamation or a homely saying. That Tuscan countryside which, in *Le Stelle*, was merely the background, is here the heart of the matter, the centre of the picture; the human figures moving therein blend with the scenery and seem, as it were, like human exponents of nature. The three poems are indeed three songs, an impression reinforced by the manner in which the violin-part is treated, it being thoroughly vocal and eminently lyrical; the violin sings, yet always in a duet with the piano, which carries out a parallel melody, and never "accompanies." (Be it said in passing that these characteristics are also found in the minor violin-pieces; e.g., *Signorine*, two elegant and exquisitely feminine sketches; *Ritmi*, bizarre and languid dances, with that longing for the open spaces that later inspired the *Coplas*; and *Capitan Fracassa*.) It is interesting to contrast the essentially dramatic vein of Pizzetti's *Sonata* for violin with the naturalistic lyricism of Castelnuovo's three *Canti*.

Derivatives of *Il Raggio Verde*, forming with it a species of marine Suite, are the *Alghe*, *I Naviganti*, and *La Sirenetta e il Pesce Turchino*; here, especially in the first two, that sentiment of humanitarian idealism predominates to which we have called attention, and which finds clearest expression in the *Fioretti di*

*S. Francesco*; the Franciscan sentiment of serene humility, such as might emanate from the heart of a primitive. In truth, these pages utter a suavely transparent speech, well-nigh unadorned, such as we should expect of the Madonnas and angels of Fra Angelico, and of all the figures in the frescos of Giotto at Assisi and Padua. *Alge* is a very short piece, built up on two themes; on hearing it one is instinctively reminded of *La Fille aux cheveux de lin*—not by any thematic analogy or other well-defined feature, but by the atmosphere created by a consonant, reposeful harmony. The development of *I Naviganti* is broader, and the work is more interesting musically; it might almost be taken for a development from the same nucleus, though with greater variety in details; the sense of vastness is awakened by the fullness of the chords and the frequent repetition of themes at an interval of a double-octave, particularly the one that Castelnuovo borrows from his master, Pizzetti.

The three *Fioretti* form the crowning point of the Franciscan day; they are, taken as a whole, one of the broadest works hitherto completed by the composer. The three symphonic frescos, conceived as a sort of musical interpretation of Giotto's pictures, have for subjects three episodes in the life of the Saint. The merit of the author of the *Fioretti* lies in his ability to discover the musical language most apt to express the inner meaning of the Franciscan parable—a language that should at once be medieval and modern; that is, neither puerile and incoherent nor a product of absurd exhumation. It is of the simplest, particularly from an harmonic viewpoint, being peculiarly limpid and transparent; to make up for this, however, there is a great melodic amplitude and rhythmic elasticity. The declamation is varied and interesting—interesting, especially, in that it is essentially lyrical, and yet intrinsically musical. Hence, its line of development is not strictly subordinated to the sense of the given idea or of each word, but has a melodic development admirable in itself and in continuous relation with the evolution of the symphonic comment. The construction of the three *Fioretti*, viewed as a whole, is decidedly singular in being strictly thematic; extremely singular is the first, in which a single theme forms very nearly the entire substance of the composition. The orchestration exhibits in the three pictures three distinct characters adapted, of course, to each in turn; it is elementary, level and tenuous in the first *Fioretto*; rich in contrast and weird, with shadings into the grotesque and dramatic, in the second; warm and tense in the third.

Of late years Castelnuovo's production has been remarkably diverse, we may venture to say a trifle dispersive; besides the musical comedy *La Mandragola*, of which we shall speak further on, he has written a *Concerto* for violin and orchestra on which a necessarily hasty examination does not permit us to give an opinion, though, as to form, it seems inspired by the Vivaldi concerto, while bearing, thematically and harmonically, the familiar imprint of our composer. Furthermore, he has set to music several of Shakespeare's lyrics taken from the tragedies and comedies of the great Briton; these pieces are among the most exquisite of all the musician has written, and discover, as always, an intimate comprehension of both the spirit and the language of Shakespeare. In fact, Anglosaxon reviewers have appreciated these attempts—that are certainly rare, if not unique—at a musical interpretation of Shakespeare to English texts and by a foreign musician. To pianistic literature Castelnuovo has dedicated three *Rhapsodies* (one Viennese, one Neapolitan, and one Hebrew); while adding no new elements to his artistic individuality, the clever and brilliant writing for piano merits high praise. There is also a short piano Suite, *Le Stagioni* (The Seasons), in which, forgoing the employment of superabundant ornamentation, the author returns to the simplicity and directness of his earliest compositions for piano.

We return to the musical comedy, in which Mario Castelnuovo felt free to unfold the third aspect of his temperament, the comico-ironical. Should the descent from the ascetic idealism of the *Fioretti* to the mundane materialism of *La Mandragola* seem too abrupt, recollect what was said above with regard to the dual nature of the Florentine, wherein there lives, beside the poet all rapt in dreams and ethereal fantasies, the acute and caustic observer. One might well say that, whereas the *Fioretti* are a realization of his ideal world, the realm of aspiration, *La Mandragola* is the actual world as it was in the sixteenth century—and perhaps is to-day. The musician himself divested the comedy of much dialogue, discarding superfluous scenes and crudities of speech, while leaving intact everything in the admirable sixteenth-century comedy that helps to make the characters life-like. This musical comedy is, withal, wholly blended of dialogue and music without exterior or decorative adjuncts (there is no change of scene during the three acts); there is nothing veristic, in the sense of Mascagni's and Puccini's operas, for Machiavelli's personages, being human, are already idealized, are *pure classical types*. Florentine comedy, indeed, but with no attempt at historical recon-

struction such as we find, for example, on the stage of Sem Benelli. Florence is barely mentioned; strictly speaking, the scene of the comedy might be laid anywhere. Yet there is not a word, there is not a note, that does not mark "atmosphere"; Florence is in the air, omnipresent and hidden, the *deus ex machina* of the comedy. And if the musician has elsewhere felt the need of having recourse to his learning, here he has given free rein to the love he bears his native city; so that a performance of the opera, which has not yet taken place, should be a direct and forceful revelation of his fervent artist-soul.

## 2. VINCENZO DAVICO

The works of Vincenzo Davico may all be gathered together in a few pages; although sufficiently numerous, the compositions of this musician do not form, in their entirety, an overvoluminous sheaf. Most of them are short pieces for pianoforte or voice, each presenting a picture, not invariably brilliant, but very often captivating by virtue of a subtle emotion that brings out its inner meaning. They are impressions, nearly always unilinear and monochordal, born to live and die in a brief span of time, but not without leaving in the mind of the hearer a tender memory and an atmosphere charged with ardent yearning. They are like short Japanese poems, a few verses embodying a profound thought or an exquisite fancy that the composer has interpreted musically with a full observance of their spirit and with such delicacy as in no way to violate their deft design, though quite often adding to the precision of the language an indeterminate halo of harmonies. They are, in sum, half-repressed outcries of the soul, fleeting vibrations, well-nigh imperceptible tremors, evoked with a simplicity of means bordering on nudity, and yet zestful, all testifying to a most absolute disdain for the stereotyped and for technical instrumental formulas; so much so that, to the concert-pianist, certain of these piano-pages might seem scarcely . . . pianistic.

Davico was one of the first in Italy to receive the message of Debussy and adopt it as a cult. While only a youth—he was born in Monaco Principato on Jan. 4, 1889—he had the audacity to present himself to the public with works that were assuredly not calculated to win him the sympathies of the majority, who are fonder of a plain, substantial loaf of bread than of highly seasoned dishes *à la française*. But Davico was fairly intoxicated by the breath of freedom wafted from beyond the Alps, that reached him, dwelling in Monte Carlo, even sooner than us; he was unable to exercise that self-control and self-criticism of which he

showed himself capable in maturer years. And after all he was predestined, as it were, to feel Debussy's influence, by reason of a native tendency to love, in art, the selfsame poetical and picturesque expressions that formed the almost unique inspiration of the genial composer of the *Nocturnes*. From boyhood Davico had disdained the forms of romantic sentimentalism (and, in music, of *hyper-melodism*); the pensive solitude of the mountains of his native Piedmont or the shores of the Mediterranean had bred in him a delicate, sensitive soul, prone to conceive the life of men and animate nature as a succession of subtle, yet substantial, subjective states. From the outset of his collaborations with poetry he had displayed a special inclination, an almost exclusive fondness, for the poets of mezzotint and *mezzavoce*, artists refined to morbidity; some veiling their ironical view of humanity in forms of an intentionally everyday simplicity, others giving vent to their orgiastic sensuality in a riot of colorful, high-sounding words. Both of these expressional realizations originated in the unbalanced mentality of the artists in the early years of the century, and were a reaction from the storm and stress of the early nineteenth century. Thus Davico began as a Debussyite by temperament and education. I recall his *Impressions d'automne* (1912) as three numbers full of those fascinating suggestions that lend such charm to the best of Debussy's *Préludes*. For this comparison the third, *Cloches dans la brume*, is of special significance; here the short strokes of the bells, like sobs or words checked on the lips, lend to the vibrant and mysterious atmosphere a poetic thrill, generating a full, far-away sonority that seems as if infiltrated through the mists. In this composition we find no clearly delineated preambles, or middle sections, or conclusions; it is a swift intuition of a lyrical episode, caught through a loophole of life. Herewith we are unquestionably in the full tide of the *aisthesis* of Debussy. On a second hearing, however, I found in these pages a something that is not of Debussy—I mean something anti-impressionistic:—a certain rigidity of contour, a tendency to define with more especial insistence certain features of the extreme esthetic condensation; then a fondness for melody, for a theme always chosen with a more or less evident view to its intrinsic beauty as a sonorous arabesque. In it all there is revealed the hand of a colorist—but of a colorist who sees not merely colors, but also the masses of the *chiaro-oscuro*, and has the gift of making the design stand out among these (dynamic) masses, sometimes but lightly traced, yet an ever-present force in rhythm and figuration, like a nourishing, interpenetrant lymph. (More-



over, besides the essential features of Davico's Italian temperament, one should not disregard the beneficial influence—in contrast with what we have called his dispersive tendency—of his course of instruction under Reger at Leipzig, crowned with a diploma in 1912. Of the Reger cult, however, there remain no traces except in a few *Lieder alla tedesca*, repudiated by their author, and, though in a less degree, in a Trio of 1912 and a Sonata of 1913 for violoncello and piano, which are, we opine, not among the most noteworthy pages of our musician.)

Besides the *Impressions d'automne* we may place the other three short Suites of impressions: *Impressions d'intérieur*, *Impressions crépusculaires*, *Impressions nostalgiques*, all conceived in the same spirit and similar form, and giving us like sensations. We must not fail to note that we sometimes feel the need of something more *fleshly*, and that, despite their limited scope as miniatures, we could here and there desire a broader sweep; certain pages are doubtless born of a delusive facility and stray away too soon, vanishing like an iridescent soap-bubble. But, taken as a whole, these twelve *Impressions*, from among which one might glean a necklace of at least six small, but pure, pearls, affirm our intuition of a poet in music, of an exquisitely sensitive soul attuned to certain crepuscular and nocturnal aspects of nature visualized as soul-states. Davico's *Notturmo*—for our musician also wrote six *Notturmi* in 1910, wavering somewhat between the spirit of Chopin and that of Fauré, yet in a finished style and an agreeably pianistic manner reminiscent of the early Debussy, him of the *Arabesques* and the *Suite Bergamasque*—is suggestive without surrendering to the fascination of an importunate and morbid melody, and without losing sight of that continuity and that sobriety of accent which are one of the characteristics of his art.

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We remarked, in passing, that our musician's sympathies were enlisted by the poetry of the *decadenti*, more especially by those called twilight poets (*poeti crepuscolari*). We may say that the subtle spirit of color is expressed either in the mystic austerity of a Gozzano or a Guerin, or, outwardly, in niceties of form and revels in color, as in D'Annunzio or Gautier. This two-sided character is found in the dual manifestation of the musician, who sets beside the *Impressions* for pianoforte orchestral pages glowing with color, that show the sure hand of a master of instrumentation with a preference for pure colors and careless of overrefinement in



the orchestral structure. Good specimens of his scores are the *Impressions antiques*, *Polifemo*, the *Poema erotico*, the one-act opera *La Dogaressa*, and in particular the last two sections of his oratorio *La Tentation de Saint-Antoine*, written more than ten years ago. This last work, which might better be called a concert-opera than an oratorio—to follow the example of the original *Damnation de Faust* or Bossi's *Giovanni d'Arco*—is set to a prose libretto made up of various extracts from a like-named work by Flaubert. It consists of three episodes. In the first appears the hermit-saint of the Theban valley, who, in the delirium of fever, has a vision of the most salient incidents of his mundane life, with all its longings and regrets. In the second is depicted the arrival of the Queen of Sheba with her splendid and promiscuous train; herein are deployed the most artful temptations of sense for the Saint's allurements into sin. In the third is set forth the symbolical and eternal conflict of the Spirit with Death and earthly lusts, ending with the victory of Death to the mystic comment of voices from the invisible. The composer employs with sobriety all the resources of timbre and color that the orchestra offers, always keeping in sight the dynamic economy of the work. Thus, from the transparent simplicity of the orchestral comment to the words of the Saint in the first episode, we arrive insensibly, by gradual enhancements, at the relatively opulent amplitude of the scene of seduction, then returning through a felicitous parabola to the severe and mystical dialogue in contrast between Youth (Lust) and Age (Death) of the final episode, where the two contrasted themes finish by blending, as it were, in a final conversion, wherein the atmosphere mysteriously becomes more and more fluid and ethereal for the reception of the tempest-tossed soul of the Saint, now victorious over the things of earth.

From the vocal side, too, the oratorio *La Tentation de Saint-Antoine* deserves consideration; the voices are led with special regard for the expression of the words and treated with easy fluency in their manifold functions. These same talents are also in evidence in the short pieces for voice and piano entitled *Elegie a Lesbo* and *Canti d'Oriente*; similar expressional features will be noted in the fine lyric, *Le Talisman*, wherein the Hindu sense of fatalism is suggested by the evenness and symmetry of the piano-part with its low-pitched chords; and a similar precision of suggestive prosodic accents may be found in the graceful and veritably Japanese *Ombre de la Lune*.

The perfection of some of these short pieces, and of others contained in other collections, such as the *Liriche giapponesi*,

possibly disposes us to be a trifle unjust in avowing our unqualified preference for them to our composer's works of wider scope—for instance, the above-described *Tentation*, and the *Requiem* for four voices written in memory of the deceased Prince of Monaco. But what we particularly appreciate in Vincenzo Davico is his keen and spontaneous sensitivity and the refined elegance revealed in his small, finely chiselled works, and in his delicate aquarelles, rather than in his more ambitious constructions and broad frescos. We cannot feel that it lessens our esteem for his art when we wish that it might avoid fields less consonant with its bent, where its charm may evaporate and its delicacy resolve itself into weakness.

### 3. RICCARDO PICK-MANGIAGALLI

One who should make no account, while reviewing the spiritual and formal factors in the works of Riccardo Pick-Mangiagalli, of the master's long sojourn in Vienna and of the influence that the Viennese artistic and social environment exerted on the development of his personality, would renounce *a priori* one of the keys that the critic has at his disposal for deciphering, as his appointed task, the artist's personality *per se* and in relation to others. After all, our love of country will not suffer if we keep well in view the artist's education in Vienna, when we have once established the points wherein Riccardo Pick-Mangiagalli is heart and soul Italian (and not merely because he is officially a citizen of the realm), although born in Bohemia (Strakonitz, July 10, 1882).

The influence of the Austrian capital made itself felt, first, through the assimilation in early years of the musical forms and styles abidingly consecrated by those musical stars of the first magnitude whose orbits crossed the sky of Vienna during the last twenty years of the nineteenth century (above all, Brahms, a sovereign potentate whose traces, even if often refused recognition, are found in many works of the period, both in the lands where German is spoken, and elsewhere); secondly, and (as we think) preponderantly, through a thorough absorption of the habits of thought and expression typical of the town-bred man, specific characteristics peculiar to the town, that lend to Vienna—at least, pre-war Vienna—an original and singularly Southern physiognomy that makes it seem like a Latin oasis amidst the Teutonico-Magyar life and culture so much in evidence just outside its gates. Of this life, the most striking features are a vivacious, though never

vulgar, exuberance; a lighthearted view of the problems of life that is never empty frivolity, but is closely akin to an Epicurean optimism of indubitably Mediterranean origin; a vein of humor that is not acrid, but has a leaning to the grotesque and caricature—masquerading—i.e., not becoming a philosophy of life (as, for example, English humor does); finally—the reverse of the medal—a facile melancholy, a love-sick yearning, a languorous sigh echoing a serenade wafted beneath the moon from a swiftly-coursing bark on the fateful waves of the majestic Danube, inevitably falling in with the rhythm of the *valse lente*.

While Riccardo Pick-Mangiagalli almost immediately threw off the scholastic influence of the great masters (we discern no further traces of them except in the *Sonata* for violin and, to a well-nigh negligible degree, in the *String-quartet*), he also overcame the other and obviously more intimate influence, but only by making thereof a second nature, that is, substantializing and *individualizing* it with the maturing of his studies and of his artistic vision, concerning which one can no longer speak of "influence" (in the strict sense of the term), excepting such as may suggest itself to anyone who studies the musician's works in the environment wherein he now lives—that of Milan; where, be it said, he lives most happily. Here he finds himself in harmony both with the outward life of man and nature, and his own inner world, to whose origins, remote in time and space, he seems to have found his way back. This world of images and ideas is unchanged in substance; studying its artistic expression in its several manifestations, we perceive manifold traces and echoes of it, and come more and more to recognize its unity and, from a certain angle, its immobility. It should be understood that we are speaking of a subjective world, a psychological attribute; for of course the art of the musician, his power of expression, develops, increases, and perfects itself; the waltz in the *Carillon Magico* is quite another thing than the waltz in *En fermant les yeux* (Op. 1), and the maskers of *Basi e Bote* present a much more definite and significant physiognomy than the somewhat mannered figures in *Silhouettes de Carnaval*. It is not merely that the musician's technique has so consolidated itself as to become a technique of the first order in his latest scores, arming the artist with all resources requisite for the realization of his conceptions; he has arrived at an equal maturity of apperception, that endows him with an ability to select and criticize, whereof, in his first period, the facile hand of the brilliant pianist sometimes discovered an intention, to say the least.

Still, his earliest pieces for piano (1904-1910), likewise including the Verlaine lyrics for voice and piano, must not be neglected either on their own account or as a preparation for more recent works. True, the most noteworthy qualities of these first essays are elegance of line and delicacy of harmony—neither being very diversified, but always pleasing, and apt for the evocation of such conceptions as the musician intuitively felt and wished to express. With the composer's first steps we are ushered into the realm of masquerade, of the jovial and sentimental maskers of the *commedia dell'arte italiana*; names dear to young and old reappear here in vivid and many-hued figurations, comical and ungraceful personages of stiff or conventional bearing, with grotesque or sentimental characteristics. The heroes of Picking-Mangiagalli's world are not complex of soul and do not set themselves up as the centre of the universe; they are named simply Colombina, Rosaura, Pierrot, Arlecchino, Florindo, and are nothing but maskers. And even so, after having known the bitterness of Beethoven's human creations, after having suffered with them the torment of uncomprehended passion and unrealizable dreams, it is a relief to dwell awhile with these sympathetic figures in their masks and finery, whose joys and griefs are simple joys and petty griefs all shared in common and revealed by gesture and word.

As aforesaid, not all these pages are of an equal purity of style; some there are that seem to have been tossed off, repeating a cliché fabricated in advance, and subserving the requirements of the pianistic hand rather than those of musical logic. Yet even in these there is more than one trace of the composer's manner; besides those already mentioned as concerning the substance, there are others that are strictly musical, contained in an harmonic sequence or in a peculiar sinuosity of the melodic phrase: a melodic phrase which is always strictly instrumental in character—and obviously not merely because intended for an instrument, but because it was essentially conceived as a sonorous arabesque—and which little by little, with the development of our musician's art, takes on a more and more striking and characteristic complexion until it becomes like the signature of the composer, not to be mistaken for another's; a melodic phrase that frequently and involuntarily falls into waltz-rhythm with dactylic feet and finished, well-rounded periods.

Together with the pianistic compositions we may take up the String-quartet, written about 1909, and still reckoned among the master's youthful works. Not that it lacks great individuality as regards both the technique of composition and the invention;

indeed, from an emotional and poetic aspect it seems to us one of Pick-Mangiagalli's most successful pieces. It is not so much a true quartet in classic form as three fancies (*imagini*) for string-quartet, bound by a slender psychological thread and immersed throughout in a unique atmosphere somewhat dim and remote. And it is in this "ambient" created by the colloquy of the four bows that, in our opinion, the value of the work resides. Of a light and fine tessitura, aside from a slight abuse of the unison, with delightful sound-effects, it is a revelation of a dreamful spirit, of a poet (even though a minor poet) who surrenders himself to the fascination of a moonlit night; of a musician withal, or above all, able to interpret in tones the stirring of the waters and the rustling of trees, and the languor, at once sad and sweet, that possesses him. This quartet is like a first step toward the realization of that sonority and that atmosphere of which the composer stood in need, soon after, for the broad phalanx of the orchestra, having already sought for it in the pianoforte—the instrument, next to the orchestra, most susceptible for externalizing those conceptions. The pianistic compositions that immediately precede or alternate with most of his symphonic writings are proof positive of such research, more especially the two *Lunaires* (Op. 33), the first of which, *Colloquio al chiaro di luna*, tends to amplify the sonority of the instrument, while the second is full of echoes of the spirit and orchestral technique of the *Rondo Fantastico*.

In 1911 was written *Il Salice d'oro*, called by its author "a musical fable," naturally with reference to its inspirational subject, and yet of no help whatever in defining the work as a scenico-musical conception. One might, perhaps, hazard a guess that the musician had in mind to create a form of mimetic dance-scene adapted to the exigences of the modern stage, as a substitute for the complicated and protracted ballets of the past century; and even if such were not his intention, the composition itself does not belie our assumption. *Il Salice d'oro* is traced upon a delicate weft transparent and filmy as a spiderweb, and inspires various imaginative scenes impenetrated by a tasteful lyricism fraught with graceful sentimentalism. The story, partly acted, partly danced, demonstrates the well-attested skill of Pick-Mangiagalli as an orchestrator and as an inventor of unrestful and characteristic rhythmic effects. *Il Carillon Magico* follows the path opened by *Il Salice*, but unquestionably represents a notable advance;—if not as regards the musical substance (wherein it resembles his first ballet in more than one point), certainly as regards scenic and instrumental interest. The personages in



this dainty "curtain-raiser" are the selfsame maskers already noted as motivating certain piano-pieces—Columbines, Pierrots, Harlequins—and besides these the *carillon* that plays the part of a *deus ex machina*, a motive at once sentimental and musical. One can easily imagine that, having to do with such characters and the scenes enlivened and inspired by them, the musician found himself wholly at ease and gave free rein to his fancy in a search after pathetic and coloristic effects a bit superficial, as suited to the subject, but brilliant and clever. The comedy illustrated in the action, the gestures and the scenes inspired a music of like illustrative effect, clear in design and distinctive in its features; a music of melodic frame and solidly constructed, in which the rhythmic and instrumental effects follow one after the other in great variety. But there is something more in this mimico-symphonic comedy—the individualization of each personage from his first appearance, an individualization no less important and noteworthy because it has to do with conventional types of a monotone and almost unvarying psychology. The musician sketched each type in such wise as to render it unmistakable; he followed them lovingly through all their vicissitudes, never losing sight of their physiognomy; sentimental and impressionable in Pierrot, merry and mocking in Colombina, lively and fantastic in Arlecchino. Every detail contributes to complete the picture, and a graceful touch of caricature, a restrained grotesqueness imparted to the frequently automatic behavior of the characters, now and again lends a pleasing gusto to the scenes.

The unquestionable mastery of Riccardo Pick-Mangiagalli over the orchestral resources, a mastery in great part intuitive, but also acquired by the study of scores, especially those of Wagner and Strauss rather than the modern French composers, incited him to crystallize some of his visions in the pure symphonic form. In this field we know of three works:—*Notturmo e Rondo Fantastico*, the symphonic poem *Sortilegi*, and the two *Preludi* (Op. 42). The first of these, written before *Il Carillon Magico*, is a strikingly effective piece, admired by the audiences by reason of the sense of grotesqueness and unreality wherewith the musician has imbued his score and expressed with ingenuous simplicity. Conversely, we confess scant sympathy for the other two symphonic works, which are of ampler scope, and to which the musician perhaps attaches an importance that we are unable to recognize. The musical material of *Sortilegi* is a trifle trite; on the other hand, the selfsame instrumental effects are often repeated, wherefrom arises an evident disproportion between what the musician wishes



to say and the language that he adopts for its expression. This defect is equally manifest, and possibly even more so, in the two *Preludi*, particularly in the second, which is entitled *Marosi*, and seeks to depict "the vast ocean, tumultuous and green . . . the formless and multiform waters," as Baudelaire puts it. This is, in fact, outside the domain of the composer, who, having tried to paint a grand panoramic fresco, ends by diluting the colors on his palette and rendering his outlines vague and indefinite. The full, exhaustless breathing of the ocean is not felt, although there are many—too many—imitative sounds whose effect, on the whole, is rather stereotyped or, at least, not original. This is not because the musician was lacking in subjective feeling; but his sensations were purely acoustic, and these, reduced to the comparatively narrow limits of the orchestra, were far from adequately evoking an image of Nature.



The orchestra of Pick-Mangiagalli—whether in purely symphonic composition, or serving to sketch and color the scenic features of his theatrical conceptions—derives, as observed above, from that of Richard Strauss rather than from that in Stravinsky's *Petrouchka*, though here and there reminiscent of this latter. While as a general thing one notes the tendency common to the ultra-moderns to give predominance to the wind-instruments and percussion and to exploit certain effects that make one think of the piano, the straitly polyphonic tessitura, the economy in sonorous resources, the play of dynamics, and, in particular, the predilection for mass-effects as well as for bringing out the peculiarities of each instrument, affiliate the scores of Pick-Mangiagalli to the best by Strauss, to *Till Eulenspiegel* and, clearly, to the *Burleske* for piano and orchestra. Naturally, our Italian musician has not lived for nothing through these recent years of impressionism and anti-romanticism, whose effect has been to simplify and clear up the symphonic style, to make its passages more nervous and incisive, and its figurations more simple and restrained. Hence the character of these scores, that might be called etchings or, in some cases, oil-paintings:—a lightness, a verve, an elegance and, at the same time, a firmness of line, that remind us of certain sketches by Chahine, the Parisianized quasi-Viennese, or by Unger to Brunelleschi. (The alliance of these two artists, Pick-Mangiagalli and Brunelleschi, was in truth a happy one; it might be hard to decide whether the music for *Il Carillon* was written to interpret

the animated scenes of the Florentine painter, or whether these latter were inspired, as they actually were, by the musician's work; so fully are these two creations the expression of a like conception by two congenial temperaments.) Certain elementary and arresting colors, deep sky-blues or emerald meadowgreens, certain decorative arabesques, tenuous lines that seem to bind the figures together as with an ærial, though tenacious, net, are interpreted in the music of *Il Carillon Magico* with a confident touch.

The satisfaction with which we have dwelt upon this mimico-symphonic comedy in preference to other, more recent, works is a sufficient indication of our opinion; we believe, in a word, that in *Il Carillon* are to be found the finest characteristics of our musician, and that in this field he will reap, as till now he has reaped, the approval of the majority.

#### 4. VINCENZO TOMMASINI

We shall make only brief mention of biographical details. Born in Rome, 1880, he studied the violin under Pinelli and composition under Stanislao Falchi; took his degree in letters, and spent a year at the school of Max Bruch in Germany; but it can be asserted that his works bear no traces of this school, so dissimilar are they not only to those of the author of the famous *Kol Nidrei*, but to those written in the style of the latest Germanic romanticism. We hasten to add that Tommasini—at first glance, and noting certain characteristics that are possibly technical rather than spiritual—seems an issue of that cradle of admirable musicians, the Paris that we knew toward the close of the last century. Assuredly, a bond of profound sympathy subsisted between the Roman musician, from youth upward, and those musicians and the group of artists who rallied to the banner of Claude Debussy;—a sympathy partly instinctive, a temperamental fraternity, and partly of cultural origin due to the fact that Tommasini, a man of culture and sensitive to niceties of style and refinements of expression, sought to gain a clear insight (which he was among the first to formulate in writing) into the so exquisitely reasoned Debussyan esthetics. Thus it is comprehensible that the Frenchman's voice found an eager listener in the young composer, who, because of his own education, had come to feel himself *dépaysé*, as it were, in the Italian musical environment of the time, that was either void of culture, or spoke the language of vulgarians, or was possessed by a Germanic infatuation, more especially for Wagner, the insincerity and

superficiality of which could be felt a mile off. Hence, Tommasini's first works—the first worthy of critical consideration, as being proper to contribute to a delineation of the musician's individuality—are indubitably influenced by his love for Debussy; to be exact, the *Poema Erotico* for orchestra and the *String-quartet* in F. —Of earlier works (those written between 1895 and 1908), we are acquainted only with three *Melodie* for mezzo-soprano, of a pale romanticism in style, and the overture *La vita è un sogno*, which is hardly more than a piece written for graduation in composition by a pupil well endowed temperamentally and well trained technically. We are therefore unable to speak of his first two theatrical attempts: *Medea*, staged at Trieste in 1906, and *Amore di Terra Lontana*, which, we believe, has never been produced. Apropos of these last, however, we would emphasize one fact—that the libretti of both were written by the composer himself; in this, Tommasini was one of the first Italian musicians after Boito, and preceding Pizzetti, to follow Wagner's lead.

The *Poema Erotico* was brought out in the Augusteo at Rome, and was not too favorably received by the public; we refer, it should be noted, to the same public of 1911 that vigorously hissed *L'Après-midi d'un Faune*. True enough, Tommasini's work followed in the furrow of the French musician's esthetics; moreover, it was the work of a young musician, Italian, and yet neither Mascagnian nor Puccinian—a rare beast, and a parlous. But no one might conscientiously fail to recognize the value of the *Poema Erotico* as the revelation of a most impressive constructive capacity—a point whereon we wish to dwell a moment; for this strikes us as one of the characteristics of all Tommasini's music, which, as owing its charm, for the greater part, to the loveliness of its harmonic tints and the circumfluent atmosphere, is always of a firm thematic construction, a stout framework wherein the melody moves, not forced and straitened, but expressive and emotional. Even in his most evanescent sketches—and Tommasini has given us several of those poetic impressions in which the musical sensitivity is provoked by a lyric vision of Nature—we always meet the musician who feels the need of encompassing his creations with a frame that does not limit them narrowly, but is needful for concentrating, I may say, the spectator's rapt gaze more directly upon the central point of the picture. Whoever would arraign the *Poema Erotico* because of its Debussyan tendencies, forgets that it is solidly founded on and developed from a single theme, that was earlier held to be . . . *too short*, i.e., not accordant with the traditional type of the consecrated Italian brand;

forgets, too, that the musician knew how to treat it in the most diverse ways to express the successive phases of his vision.

With the Quartet in F major these characteristics are still more in evidence and, in our opinion, arrive at the point where the assimilated peculiarities, the fruit of study and admiration, are happily blended with the instinctive to form the style of the artist; that this is his own, his very own, which does not bear the stamp of any other mind. To apply the epithet "Debussyan" to this quartet, which still ranks with the finest works of the Roman composer, would mean to accentuate some few features of a wholly exterior and contingent sort, and to neglect those that are deep-seated and immutable in time. These last, characteristically linear, melodic, lend the composition its unmistakably Italian complexion. This statement is not founded on the treatment of the composition from a technical point of view, on procedures in development, or instrumental details, but on the vital essence of the generative germ-cells—that is to say, on the thematic material. The themes of the first movement are really beautiful, and, however much the technical mastery of the musician may revel in a varied and interesting contrapuntal play, they never lose their leadership; their emotional appeal is always alert and emergent, nowhere smothered beneath the virtuosity of the elaboration. This fine emotionality, hovering betwixt the sensuous and the mystic, that emanates from all Tommasini's *themes*, leaves its mark on every composition of his; and the further one penetrates into the musician's works, the clearer and more luminous does it become. The composer may do his utmost in elaboration, and seek to render his expression more aristocratic and refined; yet his fundamental idea, the life-spring of his emotion, remains simple and fervent with impassioned life.

This fervor, this passion, this limpid vein of lyricism that imparts its warmth to Tommasini's pages even when it seems as if overspread with a patina of coolness (which, perhaps, is only the shrinking of the artist who fears to cry his passion aloud),—this we find in the two *Chiari di Luna* for orchestra. These two *nocturnal sensations*—the one sad and contemplative, with an acrid scent of things dead and decrepit (churches and ruins), the other lively and gay, though with a somewhat languid gayety (serenades)—have aroused admiration by the cleverness of their instrumentation and for the fine taste in color displayed in the blending of instrumental timbres; but we prefer to dwell upon the poetry stored in and exhaled by the two pictures—and it is for this that we love them—and on the fullness of their life of fantasy, which alone

makes the work of art worthy of that name. Do not forget that Vincenzo Tommasini is a Roman, and therefore sensitive, as one can be only in Rome, to the fascination of the far-flung ruins on a moonlight night when the rapt spirit would recall memories of the fervid life that was, and that even to-day still fills us with a mysterious thrill of veneration and regret. He who, from the height of the Colosseum, has gazed upon the widespread Roman Forum drenched in the light of a full Spring moon, well knows what musical impressions the view evokes:—the shattered columns, the half-ruined walls, caves and crevices shaded by shimmering marble or shadowed by dark cypresses;—it is a full scale of musical values that the moon, bathing them in an atmosphere of milky white, seemingly awakens to palpitating life. The first of Tommasini's *Notturmi* is replete with this ethereal music; and yet it can impart emotions that are not to be set at naught. Little by little, while listening to the musical flow, you again live through those moments that seem like a dream of the past that transported you into another world. No higher praise can, we think, be bestowed on this composition, which, of a truth, ranks with the best of Italian symphonic literature of to-day.

With the second of the *Notturmi* we are transported to another environment; it is still a dream-world, but it now presents a smiling face, and we recall, possibly with a touch of nostalgia, festive evenings of our youthful years and romantic or tender incidents that appear on the threshold of the soul to confront us with ironic gaze. With delicate touch Tommasini revives a gayety, not boisterous, but with a shade of sadness, as in a somewhat mannered and languid eighteenth-century print. (Emotionality of the eighteenth century, that could produce the musical comedy *Uguale Fortuna*, whose argument is knit together by a slight thread of happenings to characters of a Goldonian cast; a work not absolutely of the first rank, but with lyric scenes adequately expressed and of unusual fluidity. An emotionality that could achieve the perfect connubium Scarlatti-Tommasini in the graceful ballet *Le Donne di buon umore*, a veritable model of orchestration of the *Sonate per clavicembalo*, wherein the sonority and the very spirit of the instrument and the epoch are symphonically re-created in a way that leaves nothing to be desired.) On the whole, we feel justified in affirming that the Debussyan tendency in some of Tommasini's works is merely another aspect of the sympathy for that century to which, in our opinion, may be traced more than one root of modern French art, whether it be the art of Debussy (more especially in a spiritual sense), or that of

the anti-impressionistic ultra-moderns (in a specially technical sense); in both like a bridge between the two centuries, thrown across the nineteenth.

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It will not have escaped the reader's notice that all the work done by the Roman composer under consideration is of a lyric character rather than dramatic. And in it all, from the Quartet in F down to the present, there is a seeking to express the contemplative and static traits of his inner life rather than its active, dynamic features. The study of his works should be approached from this angle; we should not search after something that the musician did not want to put into them, such as dramatic representations of budding life, the tempestuous clashing of conflicting passions, but purely and simply the lyric effusions of an artist whose eyes and ears and mind are open to receive the impressions of the world and Nature, and who was capable of creating all the most refined instrumentalities for their expression. Fortune bestowed on Tommasini the opportunity of being simply a creative composer, a sufficiently rare gift among our young Italian musicians, who, besides being composers, are concert-players or teachers, their activities so divided that they can give but a part to composition, and not always the greater part. Thus it came that he had leisure to create whenever his conceptions were fully matured, and to revise whatever did not satisfy his self-criticism when he felt the need of so doing. We shall see, therefore, that the works of Tommasini followed each other at considerable intervals, and that their chronological succession is marked by wide spaces in which no creative work of importance appeared. Between the *Chiari di Luna* (1915) and *Il Beato Regno* (1920-21) we find but few original works—two lyrics of Carducci's for tenor and orchestra of which we can form no proper estimate from the piano reduction; the *Cinq Mélodies* (of Franz Toussaint), wherein we note more than one reminiscence of Debussy's *Chansons de Bilitis*; and the *Sonata in A* for violin and piano. This last also—which, we frankly avow, does not strike us as one of Tommasini's best—is of a prevaillingly lyric character; the first movement is wholly thematic in construction, the themes, dreamily lovely, are sinuously interwoven; then follows a *Molto sostenuto* of fine singing quality, and a *Finale* in the form of a scherzo, to our mind the finest movement of the *Sonata*, reminding us of Tommasini's chief essays in this genre (e.g., in *Humour*, the second part of a



Suite for orchestra). The entire Sonata, in which the piano-part is often over-predominant—and this, we think, constitutes its main defect—bears a vague spiritual resemblance to Brahms's sonatas for violin, in particular the one in G, by reason of its character of tenderness and melancholy grace in the first two movements;—we mean a Brahms living in the present era and knowing the works of Debussy and Ravel.

From the spirit of this sonata the step is short to that which informs the symphonic poem *Il Beato Regno*. The composer wrote this latter under the seductive influence of the beauty of Gregorian chant and the perfume of mysticism and purity exhaled by certain themes in the Liturgy, so intimately bound up with the poesy of grand cathedrals and the solemnity of the Catholic cult. On his esthetic spirit, that has refreshed itself at all the founts of beauty of every nation, this chaste purity of Gregorian chant acted as a fresh inspiration and initiation. But above and beyond the technical modal possibilities involved, he gave thought solely to its intrinsic power of expression. And out of a few themes he built up a poem that he Dantesquely entitled *Il Beato Regno*. The themes are taken from the Requiem, from the *Veni Creator*, and from the *Salve Regina*; from these he evolved a vast composition, solidly constructed, with bold and simple lines serenely intertwined and growing into the "spirit-life" more and more as they throw off—if we may venture to say so—their material weight. In this poem the musician has taken, symphonically speaking, another step forward; it seems to us that, throughout the development of this composition, there is not a moment in which the sonorous expression overpowers the lofty, wondrously serene pathos of the liturgical inspiration, and that Tommasini truly realized, in his setting of the themes he selected, the appropriate atmosphere, that envelopes them like the cloud of incense rising around them in the cathedrals.

Further, we venture to express the opinion that the musician felt, intimately and humanly, the emotion of religious song; that from these songs he drew an inspiration, not for purely decorative and exterior elements, but for elements significant of an ancient and enduring faith that never loses its hold on the soul of the most prejudiced of mortals. Tommasini, a man of the world, an esthete refined by his almost continuous wanderings through the capitals of Europe, from Madrid to London, from Paris to Vienna, has found within himself this secure retreat where he, perchance, has rested, where, perchance, he has rediscovered that perfect equilibrium which is the ideal at once of the man and of the artist.

## VIEWS AND REVIEWS

By CARL ENGEL

**R**ADIOGRAPHY has its uses. To the seafarer it is a price-less boon, especially to the ship in distress. But in other respects it only encourages man's inbred communicativeness, without regard for the importance or timeliness of the communication.

With lightning speed we now have radio news, radio concerts, radio pictures flashed to us from all points of the compass. Life is losing the element of suspense, the bliss of ignorance which our forefathers knew. Shocks pleasant or unpleasant fall upon us without delicious preparation or merciful delay. They have become instantaneous and ubiquitous.

Even the barren North, the tropic jungle no longer hold their attraction as places of refuge from the importunities of the world's affairs. Radiofied, our globe is getting to resemble more and more a vast and overpopulated tenement where strident symphonies of noises and a *bouquet* of permeating odors impress upon our senses the abolishment of privacy. And if the furnace in the cellar should be out of order, or the pipes on the top floor spring a leak, the whole house suffers. As a doubtful compensation for such ills, everybody can tell exactly what everybody else is doing, at the exact moment when it is being done.

News travelled more slowly in the days reputed to have been as good as they are old. It probably still took two or three weeks for the latest stories from Europe to reach the presses of the "Deutsche Schnellpost für Europäische Zustände" which, about 1840, flourished in New York. In its issue of November 16, 1844, this journal contained an article on the German song-composer, Wilhelm Speyer. The conceptions of what is "schnell," or of rapidity, have changed since then. That article, however, was not only up-to-date, it was just a little ahead of time. For next to slander, what is there that wings its way faster than song? Now, Speyer's songs did not begin to be reprinted in America much before 1846. That at least is the date of a Baltimore edition of "Die Drei Liebchen"—published as "The Three Students"—which is the earliest on record. Others followed in plenty. Speyer

had his sovereign hour of popularity; nor did it strike only within the Fatherland's confines. He excelled in ballads with an unhappy ending. And to a generation less frivolous than is ours, the gallant trumpeter lost on the breaking ice, or the lad bereft of his blue-eyed love, served as objects of universal compassion.

Wilhelm Speyer lived to be eighty-eight. His life has been written and published (Drei Masken Verlag, Munich, 1924) by the youngest of his twelve children, Mr. Edward Speyer, well known for many years as a resident of Shenley (Herts), under whose hospitable English roof musicians of note have delighted to meet, much as it was their custom at the home of the elder Speyer in Frankfort-on-the-Main. Mr. Edward Speyer has modestly cut his share in the book to narrative links which connect the many letters or extracts from diaries and other papers that he has carefully preserved and judiciously combined. The book represents a labor of much love; it is a handsome volume, unusually well printed, besides being what the French would call "*fortement documenté*."

Wilhelm Speyer was not a great composer, but he was a sensitive musician; he had a good brain, a big heart, and a rare talent for friendship. His friendships were not with the most illustrious men of his age—Louis Spohr was perhaps the most intimate as well as the most eminent among his closer companions—yet Wilhelm Speyer's long life was a rich one; and the story of it embraces so many notable events, touches upon such varied musical happenings, spread over nearly a century, that it is well worth the reading. For the present, unfortunately, the book is available only in German.

The affable Ignaz Moscheles once said of Wilhelm Speyer: "*That stamp of amateur I like as well as an artist.*" As a matter of fact, the pages in this book reveal a personality infinitely more likable than is that of many a musician who far surpasses Speyer as an artist. Here is the type of a man as essential to the professional musician as is music itself: the amateur of serious aim, tolerable knowledge, unselfish pursuits, sympathetic understanding, who is capable of appreciating, and ready to bear with, that difficult being—the artist—when the rest of humanity turns away coldly, without comprehension or patience. The artist badly needs *that* stamp of amateur. And it is not the least of Speyer's laurels, that so many artists had evidently need of him. They enjoyed his commerce, they respected his judgment, because they realized that—call it amateur or what you will—here after all was a fellow craftsman, a brother in their art.

Wilhelm Speyer was twenty-one when he left the University of Heidelberg in 1811, and went to Paris to study the violin with Baillot. The people then knew that they were going through an heroic age. They felt the obligations of eyewitnesses and had the instinct for diaries. Speyer was no exception. Thus he amusingly described Paër, "Directeur et Compositeur de la musique de la Chambre et Directeur des Théâtres de la Cour de S. M. l'Empereur," sitting in his salon with a powder-cloak thrown round his shoulders and holding at high noon his daily *levée* attended by musicians such as Méhul, Boieldieu, Lesueur, Baillot, Rode, Kreutzer, Dussek, and many others—but never Cherubini!—while Paër's powdered curls received the care of a skillful coiffeur.

Numberless are the accounts of Napoleon by those who saw him, be it in passing only. The great man's every wheeze and sneeze was excuse for a *mémoire*. But nothing could be more characteristic and picturesque than Speyer's account of the Emperor sitting in the imperial box at the little theatre of the Tuileries during a performance of Lencival's "Hector," on January 2nd, 1812. The whole evening the Emperor kept a serious mien. Trouble with Russia was brewing. The audience watched with curiosity for the Russian Ambassador, Prince Kurakin. At last he appeared, in a black velvet coat with diamond buttons. Duroc and Coullaincourt remained standing behind the chair of the Emperor, who could be heard occasionally to punctuate a passage in the play with a *très bien, très bien*. Only once did he retire to the open ante-room of his box to throw a hasty glance over a despatch which Duroc handed him.

Or take this other scene, a month earlier. Returned with Marie Louise from Holland and Antwerp, Napoleon had commanded Lesueur to write a Mass which was to be sung on Sunday, December 8, 1811. The composer, cautioned by His Majesty to "be simple," had to bide the good-natured ridicule of Paër and his other colleagues. (Lesueur's consuming ambition was to write "imitative and dramatic" church music!) On the appointed day the chapel of the Tuileries was resplendent with the pomp of church and court. Gold, brocades, laces, jewels, candles everywhere in profusion. The Empress, followed by her retinue, came first. She took her seat. The Halberdiers in their medieval costumes, immobile, barely blinked. After a few minutes of breathless waiting, the thud of their halberds thumping the floor was heard, and the sharp shout: "L'Empereur!" The drums of the Grenadiers began to roll. The Empress stood; so did everybody in the chapel. Surrounded by a suite of bedecorated and

beplumed Marshals and Generals, Napoleon entered, dressed in the plain uniform of the Horse-guards. The Emperor sat down, and immediately the Mass began. The music was simple, indeed, and tedious. At the Sanctus, Emperor and court rose. Napoleon swayed gently to the rhythm of the music, snuffed now and then, and kept biting his fingernails. The Agnus Dei in D flat major—strings *con sordini*, everything *dolce* and *pianissimo*—was nearing its end, when suddenly from the outside, the crash of brass bands, the fanfares of trumpets broke into the churchly strains, the rattling of galloping horses and guns came from below. 40,000 soldiers were mustered in the Place du Carrousel, to be reviewed by Napoleon. Here, Speyer tells us, nothing was left of the theatricalness in the chapel. "Everything was natural, real. The greatness and the energy of the times were embodied in that magnificent military spectacle." And Speyer lived to see the second Empire go down at Sedan; he lived five years after Napoleon III had died in England.

The bulk of purely musical interest is of course represented in the letters gathered by Mr. Edward Speyer. They are too many to give a fair idea of their contents. Spohr writes from London on April 17, 1820; at the concerts of the Philharmonic Society prevails a strange manner of conducting the orchestra: a "conductor" sits at the piano, plays from the score but indicates neither dynamics nor tempo; that is supposed to be the business of the "leader," or first violinist, who plays, however, only from a first violin part, and therefore can give the other players neither cues nor tempi; so that he is content to get through with his part and let the orchestra run along as best it may. One wonders, after such conditions become clearer, whether a symphony of Beethoven was ever heard by anyone in the composer's lifetime. Spohr claimed that he introduced in London the fashion of conducting from the score.

Moritz Hauptmann, in February, 1839, writes to Speyer that he considers visible conducting not much better than the audible kind, to which Goethe justly objected in the churches of Italy. Wolfrum in Heidelberg, not many years ago, tried to hide himself and his players behind a curtain. The audience did not care for the innovation. What would American audiences say if they were denied the pleasure and excitement of watching Mr. Stokowski or Mr. Koussevitzky! What protests would not be made by the ladies who so admire these gentlemen's "lovely backs"! But there are people who complain that their wrists begin to hurt if they keep their eyes overlong on Mr. Furtwängler.

Spohr found fault with Ole Bull for having too flat a bridge on his violin, so that he could use the A and D strings in the lower positions only; which gave to his play a certain monotony, relieved by "tricks" often more astonishing than tasteful. But then, when Spohr heard Paganini at Cassel, in 1830, he wrote to Speyer that he thought the great Italian's compositions and play a queer mixture of genius, childishness, and lack of taste. He had no desire to hear him again! So much for your artist. Now observe the amateur—that amateur who had heard Baillot, Rode, Kreutzer, nay, even Spohr, the selfsame Spohr to whom he writes on September 17, 1829:

... I will say a few words about the impression Paganini made on me. I heard him first at the rehearsal, then in several concerts, and lastly at a private soirée where he played with a lady the Beethoven F major Sonata. Although my expectations ran high, the first impressions at the rehearsal were such that I realized never to have witnessed anything like it in my life. Frey, from Mannheim, who sat next to me, swam in tears. The mysterious semi-darkness of the stage, the strange personality of the man, the unusual enthusiasm of the orchestra—bursting out every once in a while with an ovation—all this may have heightened my sensibility. But the chief thing, his play, his rendition, his musical mannerisms even, the astounding facility and clarity with which he does things that to a fiddler especially must seem of an incredible difficulty,—all this merits high admiration! The cantabile passages and the adagios he plays in a tender, touching, and yet pithy manner, such as I have never heard them done by any instrumentalist—much the way Crescentini used to sing, when I heard him in Paris fifteen years ago. . . . On the other hand, after a passage of the greatest nobility, he is often liable to lapse into a fit of the strangest whims and adopt such antiquated methods that one thinks one is listening to a violonist of past centuries, perhaps a Lully or Tartini. His playing of the Beethoven Sonata was most interesting. To tell you the strangest thing about it: after the repetition of the first part of the Rondo, he played the theme in flageolet octaves! . . . Notwithstanding his many embellishments in 32nds and 64ths, I have never in my life heard anyone play so strictly in time. . . . Paganini speaks of you with great veneration. . . .

Next March Vienna will invite the world to "celebrate" with festivals, orations, and copious banquets, the one hundredth anniversary of Beethoven's death. On April 11, 1827, Spohr writes to Speyer from Cassel:

The news of Beethoven's death has much grieved us; it has brought tears to the eyes of my wife. The Viennese are now anxious to shake off the disgrace of having let him starve; but the fact is undeniable, no matter how much they may declaim against it. I know it from a letter which he wrote me, that he suffered want. His funeral was splendid! That's the Germans all over! . . .



This quotation would form a pleasing motto to top the menu cards at the grand "Festessen."

It is known that Beethoven gave manuscript copies of his Trio, Op. 97, to Countess Erdödy, Archduke Rudolph, and Count Brunswick long before it was published. One of these copies, or more likely a fourth one, was in the possession of Beethoven's friend and pupil, Baroness Ertmann—his "Dorothea-Cäcilia"—when she visited her native town, Offenbach-on-the-Main, in 1814. She there and then gave a performance of it, at which Wilhelm Speyer played the violin part.

Among the letters to Speyer are five from Liszt. Not the least interesting among them is the first, dated Frankfort, September 10, 1841, in which Liszt writes:

Dear Friend,

I beg you kindly to arrange for my admission to the just and perfect [*gerechte und vollkommene*] Freemasons' Lodge "Unity" of the local Orient, and remain

Your

F. LISZT.

P. S.—Franz Liszt, son of Adam Liszt, born at Reiding (Comitat Ödenburg) October 22nd, 1811, Catholic, resident of Paris.

The admission took place. There is no record of his ever having resigned from the brotherhood, not even when he donned the black *soutane*. And now perhaps Heaven, Elysium, and the Eternal Orient are still quarreling over the soul of poor Liszt!

In a letter from Posen, dated March 1, 1843, Liszt relates the following remark of the Viennese publisher Tobias Haslinger:

Dear Listel, for me, as publisher, you arrived twenty years too soon; but you are making up for it—namely, if one invites you to dinner, you are two hours late, and if one sends you proofs to correct, you keep them two years.

At the Sängerkunst in Frankfort, in July, 1838, Wilhelm Speyer first met Anton Wilhelm von Zuccalmaglio. This gentleman, poet, composer, should be recommended to the particular attention of our worthy old friend, the folk-song expert, who proclaims in accents loud and incontestable his belief in the plenary inspiration of "the peepul." Zuccalmaglio—as his name indicates, of Italian descent—turned out German folk-songs so neatly that he fooled Heinrich Heine and Johannes Brahms. Not even Ludwig Erk, the renowned folklorist, detected Zuccalmaglio's authorship in certain songs which he put into his famous "Liederhort." The deception was prompted by no other motive than the harmless and pardonable wish of letting these little tunes and verses

make their way unhampered by the ties of a rather humble parentage. What are the songs of Mr. X Y Z?—something to be critically tattered, if not to be wholly ignored. Whereas *vox populi*—that is a different story. Some of Zuccalmaglio's "folk-songs" have been composed by Loewe, Mendelssohn, and Brahms. See the last's "Vergebliches Ständchen" and "Spannung," and several more. Brahms esteemed that Wilhelm Speyer, as a song-composer, had often succeeded in "hitting the popular note, in its best sense, while still writing good music." And Johannes, folk-song arranger *par excellence*, knew whereof he spoke.

Anton Schindler—famulus, factotum, and biographer of Beethoven—spent the last twelve years of his life (1852–1864) in Bockenheim, a suburb of Frankfort. During this period Speyer knew him. They corresponded. One quotation from this correspondence is especially interesting. It is taken from a letter of Schindler's, dated December 5, 1855, written "in exile at Darmstadt."

If you have seen the lines I addressed to you in yesterday's 'Portefeuille,' nothing more is needed with regard to Messrs. Morin, Chevillard, and company, than the assurance that I infinitely regret not to have been present at their performance in Frankfort—because of the cold weather. In Paris I witnessed the beginning of their work on the last Beethoven Quartets. Since then I have often heard it said how deeply they have penetrated into these mysteries. Well, they are French artists, who, like the rest of them, persist indefatigably in their task, until they have completely mastered it. I can well believe that in this respect these four men will travel like Apostles through German lands and show a light to musicians everywhere.

In August, 1856, Rossini for the last time passed through Frankfort. Speyer had nothing better to ask him than the idle question with which thousands of people probably pestered him: why had he written no opera since "William Tell"?—which then was a matter of twenty-seven years ago. Rossini answered: "Why hunt the hare, when you have killed the elephant?" And when Speyer insisted that his operas must have netted him a handsome sum, Rossini smilingly confessed that he owed his ease and comfort not so much to the success of his operas, as to the success of certain little transactions in which Baron James Rothschild of Paris had been pleased to associate him.

One whole chapter of Mr. Edward Speyer's book is devoted to the Rothschild family. The founder of the house, Meyer Amschel Rothschild (1743–1812) already stood in friendly relations with the family of Speyer. Wilhelm Speyer's father, George Speyer, was head of the Frankfort banking firm of J. M.

Speyer Sons. In 1819, engagements in an unfortunate venture brought about the fall of the business and led to George Speyer's death. Wilhelm Speyer lost the greater part of his patrimony. Reluctantly he essayed various commercial undertakings, and finally became a stock-broker on the Frankfort exchange. But his heart was in music and there it remained. His many musical friendships, the wide favor which in time his own songs earned, were his solace and reward. On July 21, 1862, Wilhelm Speyer made the following entry in his diary:

To-day, on my 72nd birthday, I praise God and his goodness! After a stormy life I am enjoying, in my old days, independence. The most strenuous activity of 30 years and the unexpected, apparently providential inheritance from my uncle, enable me now to live from my income. May Heaven further bless me and mine.

These samples, brought up at random from Mr. Edward Speyer's book, prove sufficiently how rich a mine are his family papers. Probably Mr. Speyer could follow this volume on his father's life with another one, not less interesting, by delving into his own recollections, by sinking a shaft into his own correspondence with notable men and women of his day.

The narrow by-paths of a great cultural epoch often lead the historian to discoveries of no mean importance. For the general reader they open up—better than does the broad clearing of the main avenue—intimate views into shaded, quiet corners where frequently dwells the true spirit of a generation. These views are like "close-ups" that reveal blemishes as well as charms which the distance blurs or effaces, but which impart to the picture a higher color, a fuller measure of convincing detail. To know the leaf is to know the tree. Nor is it on the tallest tree that grow the sweetest flowers. Far from the most unprofitable reading is a leisurely book about the not so great of this Earth.



